

SCREAM

#18

GEORGE ROMERO
SPLATTER PLATTERSMOVIES THAT
SCARRED
US FOR
LIFE!

\$7.95 USA/CAN



ARCH OBOLER'S FIVE NIGHT GALLERY

NEW FROM TROMA TEAM VIDEO

WWW.TROMA.COM

WWW.POULTRYGEISTMOVIE.COM



COMBAT SHOCK

2-DISC NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN DIRECTOR'S CUT



AVAILABLE
7-28-09

Featuring all new interviews
with John McNaughton,
Jorg Buttgeriet, William Lustig
Jim Van Bebber, Roy Frumkes
and many more!

"An angry, grueling, brutal, and uncompromisingly pitch-black work." - CINEFANTASTIQUE
DIRECTED BY LLOYD KAUFMAN
POULTRYGEIST
NIGHT OF THE CHICKEN DEAD



2-DISC
SPECIAL EGG-DITION

Includes the feature length
behind-the-scenes
cluck-u-mentary

POULTRY IN MOTION
Truth Is Stranger Than Chicken

Audio commentary by
Lloyd Kaufman

Music videos, trailers,
THIGHS THE LIMIT!

THE LAST HORROR FILM



AVAILABLE
5-19-09

BONUS MATERIAL!

NEW DOCUMENTARY ON
THE LIFE OF JOE SPINELL

INTERVIEW WITH
WILLIAM LUSTIG

MANIAC 2 AKA MR.ROBBIE
RARELY SEEN SHORT FILM

DIRECTED BY
BUDDY GIOVINAZZO
(COMBAT SHOCK)

AND MUCH MORE!

STARRING
JOE SPINELL

(MANIAC, GODFATHER, ROCKY)

IN STORES NOW!

AVAILABLE AT



"CUTS DEEPER THAN THE AVERAGE SLASHER FILM." - MOVIE GAZETTE



SCREAM #18

Our homage to the late, great Fory Ackerman—inspired by the cover of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* #107, with a *Scream* twist of course!

Regan MacNeil is your host, take her hand and join the crew for "Films That Scarred Us For Life." You may want to bring Purrell with you, we hear what Ms. MacNeil has is contagious!

Artwork by
Bill Chancellor

CONTENTS

SCREAMAL

FILMS THAT SCARRED US FOR LIFE

SPLATTER PLATTERS

THE NIGHT GALLERY

EDDA DELL'ORSO: THE VOICE THAT SOARED

FOUR REMEMBER FIVE

MYSTERY PIC

TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE

GEORGE ROMERO'S TALES

DVD REVIEWS

KEN MCINTYRE'S *WRONG WAY HOME*

DVD QUICKIES

COVER ARTIST:

Bill Chancellor

Writers this issue:

Greg Goodsell, Shane M. Dallmann, David Wilt, Ken McIntyre, Tom Weaver, Michael Thomason, Phil Avelli, Emma Westwood, Glenn Erickson, Dan Roebuck, Kevin Sean Michaels, Mike Sullivan, Joe Wawrzyniak, Aaron Graham, John Skerchock, Mads Jensen, Lee Peterson, Jose Prendes, Darryl Mayeski.

Screamal illustration by Bob Genewski.

Wrong Way Home illustration by Robert Scott.

Advertising inquiries:
Phone (570) 592-8125

All contents © 2009 Scream Publishing. Nothing may be reproduced in whole or part without written permission from the editor.

Single copy \$7.95 U.S.A. and Canada. Dealer inquiries welcome.
Scream Magazine, 41 Mayer St., Wilkes Barre, PA 18702. All photos used are for promotional purposes, and are owned by their respective companies.



Back in issue #6 we did an article titled "Scenes That Made You Jump!" At the time, I was thinking of how great it would be if I could gather several writers together to reminisce about movies that made them feel uneasy. Twelve issues later, that idea is now a reality. Every horror fan will probably admit that there is a film that still creeps them out just a bit. Of course, as youth fades we become desensitized to what frightened us on the big screen—and if that feeling has not gone away, congratulations! I envy you. "Films That Scarred Us For Life" is a recollection from each writer's personal perspective. There is no 'best' of selection here. So before you write a letter or send off an e-mail asking, "How could you forget about *The Shining*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *The Evil Dead*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, *Halloween*, *The Thing*, or *The Love Guru*?" Please remember—it's not a list.

"Films That Scarred Us For Life" gathers our fine usual suspects of writers—Meters Goodsell, Dallmann, Wilt, Graham, Thomason, Skerchock, Wawrzyniak, Sullivan, and Michaels, while adding first time contributions from Phil Avelli (Ryko Distribution's DVD marketing manager), Lee Peterson (Lee brought so many fantastic movies to the now defunct Pioneer Theater in NYC), actor Dan Roebuck (we're not worthy!), Emma Westwood (author of the book *Monster Movies*), and Glenn Erickson (Mr. DVD Savant). I'm humbled to have such a great crew on board for this project.

When I asked Tom Weaver if he could write an article about Arch Oboler's *Five*, I never expected so much information in such little time. "Four Remember Five" is an impressive piece that Tom whipped up with very little time. Once again, Tom hits it out of the park. If you haven't seen *Five*, you'll certainly want to pick up the recently released DVD. If you have seen this apocalyptic tale, you'll want to revisit *Five* again.

It's been a while since Ken McIntyre's name was seen in *Scream*. We don't expect Ken to fall off our radar anytime soon. His new column, Ken McIntyre's "Wrong Way Home" makes its debut here, and will continue in subsequent issues of *Scream*.

Also new to *Scream* are DVD reviewers Jose Prendes, Mads Jensen (thanks to *Savann Films* David Gregory for the great recommendation!), and illustrator Robert Scott, who created the logo for Ken McIntyre's "Wrong Way Home" column. Welcome aboard! As always, we are grateful for Bill Chancellor's amazing cover! Bill is nominated for a Rondo award, as is Greg Goodsell—we're proud of you!

Thanks go out to Rob Hauschild, Kevin Clement, Diabolik DVD, Mike & Lisa at Something Word Video, Bill Lustig, Evan & the folks at Troma, Beth at Cinema Libre, Neil at Ace Records, Dave Szukin, Bob Muzarski, Draculi Tour and Charles, Mike Raso, Mark Hutzy, Steve Puchalski, Joe Hauzo, Dave Baumiller, Ted Bohus, Chris Thes, Ken Kish, Ed Peters, Kevin Pagan, Bloodgood Video, Mike Laframer, Dawn Cresser, Roader Designs, Mike Yurcho, and my wife Karen for overseeing everything in my life!

If you're a writer who'd like to contribute to future issues of *Scream*, drop us a line at *Scream Magazine*, 41 Mayer St., Wilkes Barre, PA 18702, or send an e-mail to SCREAMAG@AOL.COM.

Enjoy the issue!

Editor
Scream Magazine

Back issues of *Scream* are
available
on the web at
www.screemag.com

SCREAM



My name is Barry Anderson and I am the Director of Ripley's Believe it or not! Art dept. We create all the strange figures for our museums around the world (many are in traditional wax). I have been a fan of your magazine since I discovered it out on the rack of a book store. After reading issue #17, I felt that I needed to contact you and just say how great *Scream* magazine is. I have worked my entire in South Florida doing makeup fx on B-horror films (*Day of the Dead*, *Scared Stiff*, *Jeepers Creepers*) to name a few. For many years I was not thrilled that I worked almost exclusively on low budget films, but I began to embrace the idea when I started reading magazines such as yours, and realized I grew up watching B films—and now I am proud that I contributed to some of Florida's film history. Your article on the *Creature from the Black Lagoon* was superb, and really made me feel like a kid. Both Ben Chapman and Ricco Browning are wonderful guys who love the fans. I was lucky to have made contact with Ben before his passing away and he was a very nice man. Thanks for publishing a fun magazine that is filled with great articles, and your homage to all those who have contributed to wild and fun entertainment.

Sincerely,

Barry Anderson
Director of Art Dept.
Ripley Entertainment Inc.
Orlando, FL

Thank you for the kind words, I appreciate fans like you, who not only enjoy the horror biz, but have an active part in it... believe it... or not!

Hello,

Just found your magazine for the first time here in London. I must say that I find your DVD review section to be the best thing about *Scream*—not to say the other articles are rubbish, they're fine too. Thankfully the internet provides many venues that carry the imported titles in your magazine for sale. Just from reading issue number 17, I purchased *Shiver*, *Isolation*, *The Queen of Black Magic*, *Hell's Ground* and *Cold Prey*—all films which I didn't know existed before reading about them in *Scream*.

Cheers!

Ian Baxter
London, UK

Howdy,

Just wanted to drop a line and congratulate *Scream* on another fine issue. *The Forbidden Zone* was always a guilty pleasure of mine. Greg Goodsell's article answered many questions that I wished I could have asked Richard Elman myself. I've never heard of Brother Theodore before, but Jeff Sumrell's bio-pic piqued my interest into finding out more about the man. I caught *The Pharaoh's Curse* on AMC—thought it was a total bore, but then again, I'm not a fan of mummy movies. *Blitzkrieg* looks like a lot of fun, I'll have to pick it up on DVD. All in all, a fine issue. I like that your mag isn't ad driven, but wish that *Scream* was completely in color.

Take care,

Chuck Kerber
Staten Island, NY

Chuck,

We would loooove to publish every page in color, and perhaps we will in the near future. Right now, with this struggling economy, we're glad to be publishing in black and white with some color thrown in!

**WE WANT TO HEAR
FROM YOU!
DROP US A LINE AT:
SCREAM MAGAZINE
41 MAYER ST.
WILKES BARRE, PA
18702
OR SEND AN E-MAIL TO:
SCREAMAG@AOL.COM**

Scream magazine,

As a new subscriber, I want to thank you for the extra DVDs you added into my package. I've had Hammer's *Icons of Horror* collection on my wish list, so it was a great surprise to receive it. I had never heard of the movie *Stuck*, but seeing that it was a Stuart Gordon film (*Castle Freak*, *Re-animator*, *From Beyond*), it instantly grabbed my attention. Although it was nothing like his previous horror efforts, I still found the DVD to be very entertaining. Plus, I can't complain—it was free!

Thanks again!

George Klein
Toronto

You're welcome George! Our subscription offer is still in effect for this issue. The first 25 new subscribers will receive a brand new horror DVD release, along with their choice of selected back issues of *Scream*. To learn more about the offer, see our ad on page 55.



FILMS THAT SCARRED US FOR LIFE!

ARTICLES BY YE OLD EDITOR AND FIENDS

Almost everyone loves a good scare—as long as it's in the comfort of their homes or on the big screen in a theater. Most will say that the images which have frightened them happened in their young lives, when their imaginations were still innocent and the thought of "what if" was more of a possibility than not. I decided it would be an interesting idea to gather several *Scream* writers together to find out what movies developed them into the mess—um . . . film historians they are today. We'll start with the biggest mess in this group, yours truly, editor in chief . . .

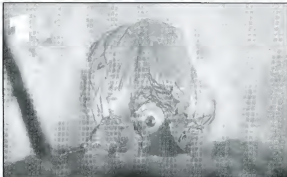
I was raised in the 1960's by Fundamentalist Christian parents. Horror movies were forbidden to be seen—they were the work of Satan. Fortunately for me, my parents would invite friends and family over almost every Saturday night. They would all gather in the kitchen and sit around talking for hours into the night, never leaving the table, except for the occasional bathroom run. This gave me plenty of time to sit in front of the TV and watch my greatest discovery—*Chiller Theatre*! Whenever the coast was clear, I'd tune into WPIX Channel 11 at 8 p.m. to watch the most hideous films ever made. And *Chiller* never let me down.

Looking back at some of the films on *Chiller*, I find it difficult to believe that I found the big goonie bird from *The Giant Claw* to be truly scary—the same could be said for *The Crawling Eye*. However, to this day, a good number of movies I watched on *Chiller Theatre* still pack a punch.

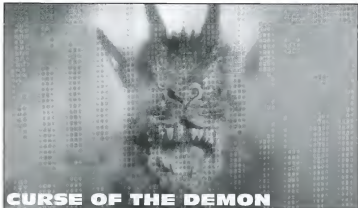
The Werewolf (1956), *The Hideous Sun Demon*, *War of the Colossal Beast*, *The Tinger*, and *Black Sunday* were just a few of the memorable movies that had my nite life working overtime on many late Saturday evenings. Although these films were great fright fare, there were three particular movies shown on *Chiller Theatre* that left their mark on me—*Curse of the Demon*, *Carnival of Souls*, and *Horror Hotel*.

Hearing the opening music from *Horror Hotel* (aka *City of the Dead*, 1960) was nightmare inducing enough—it still makes me feel uneasy. Watching the evil Elizabeth Selwyn (Patricia Jessel) and her coven of witches (led by Christopher Lee) prey on young college students in modern day Salem, Massachusetts gave me chills. It played regularly on *Chiller Theatre*, and it was always worth repeat viewings.

Carnival of Souls (1962) was by far the creepiest film I encountered as a child. Seeing the dead come to life was just too much for my young mind to comprehend. But I witnessed it—in stark black and white. Like *Horror Hotel*, the eerie music and gloomy atmosphere in *Carnival of Souls* set the stage to raise the fright factor to maximum terror.



- 1) *The Crawling Eye* only wanted to be loved.
- 2) The big goonie bird from Sam Katzman's *The Giant Claw*.
- 3) Elizabeth Selwyn is a witch! From *Horror Hotel*, aka *City of the Dead*.



CURSE OF THE DEMON



THE WEREWOLF



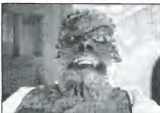
CARNIVAL OF SOULS

Rounding out my *Chiller* trifecta is Jacques Tourneur's *Curse of the Demon*. Making its theater debut in the U.K. in December 1957 under the title *Night of the Demon*, the film didn't appear in the U.S. until July of 1958, with *Curse* swapped for *Night* and chopped by twelve minutes. Tourneur was upset that producer (and *Demon* screenwriter) Hal E. Chester wanted an actual monster to be seen in the film. Tourneur thought that keeping the creature to our imagination gave the picture the supernatural feel he originally desired. Chester wanted viewers to see the demon, and thankfully, he got his way. Film historians believe that Chester was a cheapskate who ruined a great supernatural thriller, but many baby boomers who grew up watching *Curse of the Demon* on the small screen may beg to differ. He had co-produced *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* in 1953, so he knew a thing or two about the success of scare movies. Then again, Tourneur's film resume included *Cat People*, *I Walked with a Zombie*, and *War Gods of the Deep*. Either way, without the collaboration from both men, *Curse/Night of the Demon* would not be the masterpiece it is considered today.

In the late sixties and early seventies, *Chiller Theatre* would receive competition from the equally wonderful *Creature Features*, shown on WNEW Channel 5 and hosted by The Creep (Lou Steele), who was part horror host, part philosopher. Another show was *Scream-In* on WPHL Channel 17 in Philadelphia, hosted by Dr. Shock (Joe Zawislak), who looked a lot like *Chiller Theatre*'s very own John Zacherle. All three of these programs had a huge effect on my love for horror films.



CREATURE FEATURES



The Hideous Sun Demon!

host. He even wore a fez! When I interviewed Ted back in *Scream #1*, the host said he had no interest whatsoever in monster movies. But thanks to *Ghoul School*, I was able to see Mario Bava's *Black Sabbath* and *Atom Age Vampire*, *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell*, *Dr. Blood's Coffin*, and *Castle of the Living Dead*. A few years later, Ted moved his program to the local PBS channel. *Ghoul School* was transformed into *Monstermania*, and films were shown commercial-free—and often uncensored! *The Wicker Man*, *Vampire Circus*, and *Countess Dracula* were just a few films that were given the uncensored treatment.



we could sneak in—since we were too young to drive anyway—and not old enough to attend R-rated films. The owners eventually caught on to what we were doing, but it didn't matter. They knew my friend and I spent enough cash at the concession stand to warrant our entry, and we sat quietly on a bench that was near the food stand so that we could view the movies. This was our church.



THE DESCENT

high for coming attractions on TV—you never knew when they were going to pop up.

We've all become desensitized to what scared us when we were kids. Yet we still crave to see a movie that will make us jump out of our seats. The last horror film that did that to me was Neil Marshall's *The Descent*. Thanks Neil—you're my Ponce de León.

Not all of my monster movie discoveries came from horror-themed programs such as *Chiller Theatre* or *Creature Features*. Moving from New Jersey to Pennsylvania just before my teen years, I had the advantage of gaining new local channels, while keeping the New York stations through cable. Occasionally, Horror week would air on *Dialing for Dollars*—a weekday afternoon program that would play a movie, while giving away prizes in between commercial breaks. It was hokey, but people watched. Sometimes their selections were impressive—Giant Monsters week—Dracula week—or even American International Pictures week! It was very surreal for the time.

The local ABC affiliate channel had *Uncle Ted's Ghoul School* on Friday night. Like Dr. Shock, Ted was a former magician whose show was based out of Pennsylvania. Ted would do a magic trick or two, then go back to playing whatever monster movie the powers that be picked for him. Ted looked more like a confused Shriner than a horror

In the seventies, television was the only source to see many of these films. In a way, scouting the *TV Guide* for a great horror flick was like digging for gold. I'd take a pen to the *Guide*, circle the movie I yearned to see, and count the days until the film, which I had only read about in magazines like *Castle of Frankenstein* or *The Monster Times*, was going to air. And more times than not, the find was a real gem. The CBS Late Night Movie had the world television premiere for *Shock Waves*—a film I can only recall viewing once on TV.

I was weaned on television, the big screen was definitely off limits in our household. A friend of mine lived near a drive-in—it was in walking distance from his home. His parents attended the same church as my mother and father did, so staying over night was fine with them. As strict as his parents were, they allowed us to roam out late in the summer, as long as we stayed close by—and in this case, close by was the drive-in. We practically lived there! The two of us found a path where

Imagine a double bill of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *The Exorcist*—or *The Vault of Horror* and *Tales from the Crypt*! The drive-in was a magical place. It showed movies the way they were meant to be seen, and I felt special, knowing that I was viewing something that many of my peers were not allowed to see.

As I grew into my teens, scares were harder to come by, but a few still remain in my memory. Seeing *Alien* and *The Shining* in a packed theater was special. The small screen had lost its luster for the most part, although New York channels were notorious for showing frightening trailers late at night, such as Fulci's *Zombie* ("We are going to eat you!") and Bill Lustig's *Maniac*. The shock factor was



FILMS THAT SCARRED US FOR LIFE:

THE UNHOLY FOUR

BY GREG GOODSELL

On the topic of movies that emotionally scarred me or freaked me out—where to begin? Ever since I was traumatized by the trailer for *Frankenstein Meets the Space Monster* (1965) incongruously slipped into a kiddie matinee of the animated film *Gay Purr-ee* (1962) that I attended with my mother and sister while a fresh-eyed youngster, I have fruitlessly sought out other such experiences. I can't narrow it down to a single film, as I have countless favorites; all of them leaving me scarred and freaked out in a positive way. When pressured to come out with a specific film, I must cite four titles, two of which are acknowledged classics, one a routine programmer, with the fourth and final one considered a lavish and expensive misfire.

The first, *Them!* (1954), screened on TV while I was a very impressionable tyke, haunted me for years afterwards. Everyone recognizes this film as being the first and best of the giant bug movies of the fifties. To an eight-year-old boy just beginning to recognize the mechanisms of the world around him, *Them!* is an especially horrific experience. Beginning with a traumatized little girl roaming the Nevada desert clad in a bathrobe and clutching a doll, *Them!* tapped into my very real fears as a child. Dependant on adults that could be snatched up and eaten by giant ants, I was keenly aware that my suburban security was a tenuous one. Unlike other creature features of its era, *Them!* builds up slowly and gradually before its unconvincing mechanical beasts arrive. Until our first full-on glimpse of the ants during a desert windstorm, we hear a high-pitched whine with the characters being killed offscreen. In one memorable early sequence, two policemen discover a trashed general store; ants swirling around some spilled sugar serve as a foreshadowing. As one policeman goes off to headquarters, the other hears a distinctive wail in the high desert winds. Walking outside camera range, the policeman lets out a terrified scream. How effective is mere suggestion...

What made *Them!* so unsettling for myself was how realistic and in tune the film was to the mundane and everyday world that surrounded me at that time. Unlike other horror films that were usually set in some undefined middle European locale or shadowy castle, *Them!* was set in a stark universe of military barracks, clinics and sewer systems. More disconcerting still was the anxiety expressed by all the grown-ups in the film, unable to comprehend the mysterious menace swirling all around them. Older people were supposed to know everything, and keep little kids like me safe from harm. Viewing the film today, my favorite scene is the one in which a lady psychiatrist trots out a long stream of clinical terms intended to diagnose the traumatized girl's condition. A whiff of insectoid joy juice under her nostrils sends the girl cowering in a corner shrieking "Them! Them! Them!" This scene would have a personal resonance for me later on, when I too would be diagnosed as a troubled child and be subjected to other "hit and miss" analysis by concerned adults.



The Saturday afternoon creature feature wasn't done with me just yet. The following week, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) was broadcast. Also set in the ordinary and commonplace, Don Siegel's classic of paranoia left me quaking in my knee pants. In a small California town, very much like the small California town I was growing up in, pod people from beyond the stars arrive to take the identities of the family next door. Other than the few shots set in a greenhouse—where alien pods regurgitate unformed human replicas in geyzers of soap bubbles—there were no conventional monsters. The creatures in *Body Snatchers* are your friends and family, smiling and welcoming, only dropping their guises when other human beings' backs are turned. The snotty, superior condescension of the pod people are in fact reminiscent of an impatient adult lecturing a child.

Body Snatchers has many themes and ideas that are far too terrifying for the unprepared youngster to grasp. How do we know the teachers at school really have our best interests at heart? The friendly policeman that we're supposed to go to if we're lost in an unfamiliar neighborhood, how do we know that he's not some malevolent monster from outer space? William Cameron Menzies' *Invaders from Mars* (1953) had many of the same ideas, but relied on a dime-store surrealism to offset its scares. The one-two punch of *Them!* and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* on my fragile mind was almost too much to bear. Don't trust the squeaking noise you hear late at night down the hall from your bedroom... And furthermore, don't trust the people who say they're your parents asleep in the next room!

Speaking of family, yet another film that I saw with my mother and sister in 1972, at a regal downtown theater usually reserved for Walt Disney children's matinees set my brain awirl with all manner of cinematic possibilities. *Tales from the Crypt* (1972), directed by Freddie Francis, is not even five minutes old when a pre-Dynasty Joan Collins bashes her loving husband's brains out with a poker all over the evening newspaper. More grisly shocks were in store. Hearts torn out, hands lopped off, wicked wardens falling into walls of razor blades—it wasn't fit for a young boy that had heretofore been nursed on Comics Code-approved pap. I spent most of the film hiding my face in my hands and I loved every minute of it.

I knew that *Tales from the Crypt* was based on EC comics that were snatched up and banned long before I came on the scene. I also knew that the comics were the work of William Gaines, the avuncular hippie-like publisher of *Mad* magazine, a humor periodical enjoyed by myself and my parents alike. I was totally unprepared for the succession of grisly shocks at this matinee. I was simultaneously appalled and delighted—this omnibus of horrors appealed to my childlike sense of right and wrong, while shocking me with all manner of sights and sounds.



Tales from the Crypt was Amicus Productions' most popular film to date. Based on the American EC horror comics such as *Vault of Horror* and *Haunt of Fear*, *Tales from the Crypt* was one in a long succession of portmanteau films the studio first began with *Dr. Terror's House of Horrors*. William Gaines allegedly had mixed feelings about the result. Producer Milton Subotsky allegedly hated the film's grimness, yearning to return to the escapist musicals he had started his career with, such as *Rock! Rock! Rock!* As a director, Freddie Francis was capable of masterpieces (*The Skull*, 1965) to some of the worst dreck imaginable (*Tragi, The Vampire Happening, Son of Dracula*). He would enjoy later success as a world-class cinematographer and would keep steadily working right up until his death in 1999.

Viewing it today, where it is paired with its far inferior sequel *Vault of Horror* (1974) on a Midnite Movies Double Feature DVD, *Tales from the Crypt* remains a superior horror programmer, still vastly superior to the uneven HBO TV series that bears its name. Its importance to me was in that it forced me to look at the people behind the camera, being keenly aware that this blood-drenched flick was originally the work of a man who flooded newstands with a beaotic, grinning Alfred E. Neumann offering up laughter and good cheer. I began to actively seek out other films directed by Francis, and began to appreciate the transition that the written word takes before it is brought to the screen. Where *Them!* and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* had twisted my head around with fright, it was *Tales from the Crypt* that had twisted my head around to the notion of art in cinema.

The fourth and final film in this roundup is one that is included in many horror genre surveys, although it is generally not considered to be a "horror film." *The Day of the Locust* (1975), director John Schlesinger's adaptation of Nathaniel West's novel of Hollywood life in the thirties, is not well remembered today, but the film had a far greater impact on my budding mind that *The Exorcist* (1973) did a few years earlier.

Centered on a collection of film factory fringe types a few steps away from the soup lines, *Locust* features an impressive cast. William Atherton plays Todd Hackett, an up-and-coming art director with eyes on aspiring actress Faye Greener (the incredible Karen Black) who lives across the way in a crumbling Hollywood duplex with her ex-vaudevillian father (Burgess Meredith). The characters try to claw their way up the Tinseltown ladder with no success, and Faye must turn to prostitution in order to pay for her father's funeral. Faye then sets her eyes on nebbishy accountant Homer Simpson (Donald Sutherland) as a potential meal ticket, but things fall apart at a disastrous drunken orgy. All the characters converge at a Hollywood movie premiere, where Homer brutally stomps a child to death in a fit of anger and despair. The crowd rises up in mob vengeance to kill Simpson, and transform into faceless monstrosities—the "locusts" of the title—in a hallucinatory riot.



The Day of the Locust, in its wild and expressionistic final half hour was by far the most horrifying thing I had seen on film up to that point. Seeing it in my confused adolescence, I was drawn to the sexual undercurrents running throughout the film and was left breathless by the organic intensity of its climax. Far more importantly, *Locust* would smack me across the head with its brutal truths. A native of Bakersfield, I grew up in the shadows of the Great Depression, acutely aware of all the people around me who had come to California in search of a dream. Most found disappointment and despair, and carried on a vicarious life through the popular media. The displaced Okies and Arkies from the Dust Bowl worshipped their movie stars and ball players and politicians from afar—but would rise up and smash their idols if inclined to do so. Actress Karen Black appears to have a similar "love/hate" relationship with the film. When I asked her to autograph a poster of *The Day of the Locust* at a movie convention, she threw up her fingers in a sign of the cross. Later, she would inscribe one of her glossy 8 x 10's of her as Greener in the shadow of the Hollywood sign with one of her choice bits of dialogue. "Hollywood parties —PUKE! Best to you Greg! Karen Black."

When it came time for me to make my own horror film about Bakersfield, I made sure to include plenty of clips from *The Day of the Locust*. With able assist from editor extraordinaire Damon Packard, footage from the riot scene was interwoven with my story about a young male hustler who falls under the influence of an evil group of powerful homosexuals. Entitled *Lords Part One*, the six-minute short is a meditation on a local legend that is just as true as any other story to come out of Hollywood.

Of the four films mentioned above, I see no real common thread. *Them!* Beware of giant ants. *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Beware of other people. *Tales from the Crypt*. Beware of the people behind the camera. *The Day of the Locust*. Be aware of the power of cinema. Perhaps the best we can all hope for is to simply remain aware . . .



FILMS THAT SCARRED US FOR LIFE: THE BLOB

BY JOHN SKERCHOCK

When my editor asked me to contribute to this issue I told him the name of the film I wanted to write about. I could hear the disbelief in his voice when I told him how *The Blob* had crept me out as a kid.

Let's look at the facts. It creeps, it crawls, and it glides, and slides across the floor and right through the door. It is silent. It is deadly. Once it touches you, you are it, or worse yet, its dinner.

Revisiting *The Blob* today you've got to wonder what the heck I was thinking. After all, the movie is more than fifty years old! It's low budget, and you don't really get to see anything gory. Yet the imagination works magic with what we perceive and anticipate, and *The Blob* was one of those movies where you could let your imagination run wild.

The first time I saw *The Blob* was in the winter of 1967, I was eight years old. We had a color television set back then (one of the first in the neighborhood) so I got to watch the movie just as it was meant to be watched. I didn't have the safety of black and white.

Let me set the scene for you. I lived in a small coal mining town in Northeastern Pennsylvania. My house was at the west end of town. It was the next to the last house. We had railroad tracks behind the house, coal banks, a creek, and lots of woodland. There were plenty of places for a space alien to hide.

Growing up I had a keen interest in astronomy. The moon launches were a regular topic on the news, and science fiction films and those delicious Gerry and Sylvia Anderson marionette television series were all the rage—*Fireball XL-5* and *Thunderbirds*. Santa had brought me my first telescope the Christmas before and on summer nights I was out in my backyard watching the changing face of the moon.

Flying saucers were a big topic back then as well. The Kecksburg UFO incident happened December 9, 1965, only a few years before. I knew Kecksburg was in Pennsylvania, but I didn't know where. It could have easily been the next town over from mine. I reasoned that if a flying saucer could visit there, it could also visit my town.

The creepiness of *The Blob* involves this rampaging monstrosity devouring people while going mostly unnoticed throughout the film. A doctor and his nurse are quickly devoured, a garage mechanic meets a similar fate, and an entire barroom filled with customers suddenly becomes empty. There was no on-screen bloody massacre of victims. You didn't see body parts flying or blood gushing. The bulk of the body count took place off camera where most viewers wouldn't notice it. Yet, this wholesale massacre didn't go unnoticed by me. As the movie progressed the Blob turned from a clear color to a deep red color. I knew what that meant. I knew the Blob had feasted.

The movie focused on the efforts of Steve McQueen to alert the public to this alien danger. I bet most viewers didn't notice the underlying death and destruction hinted at in many scenes. I did and it left a lasting impact on my psyche.

The end was not satisfying at all. The only way to stop the Blob was to subject it to cold. Cold didn't kill or destroy it. Cold simply forced it into hibernation. My God, what if the Blob had struck during a heat wave?

My childhood trauma would have been greater had I seen *The Blob* during the summertime. Fortunately for my sanity, it was winter. Ice and snow were all around, and I felt good about it, because I knew at least, for a while, if another Blob was out there, the cold was holding it at bay.

I do not know how long it took me to get over the horrors I'd witnessed in *The Blob*. I do remember going to school the next day and making sure I knew the location of every fire extinguisher in the place just in case. If freezing the Blob with fire extinguishers worked in the movie, it had to work in my world too.

I refused to watch *The Blob* after that. I did watch *Beware! The Blob* (often referred to as *Son of the Blob*) and I remember laughing at it. And in 1986, my friend Jeff Lange and I went to see the remake starring Kevin Dillon. We were the only ones in the theater and we laughed most of the way through the movie. Yet, I refused to watch the original again.

It took a rare event in 1997 to cause me to watch *The Blob* one more time. Nothing else worthwhile was on television! It's rare, but it happens. With a pillow clutched to my chest I sat down and watched the film again after avoiding it for thirty years.

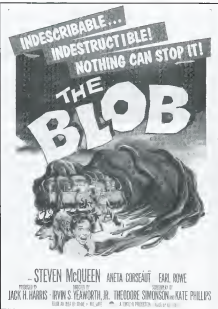
What I saw amazed me. The movie made references to Downingtown, Pennsylvania. Had I known, as a child, that the movie took place in Pennsylvania I would probably have gone into shock. What took me by surprise was that I had worked and lived in Downingtown just a few years before, and I recognized the diner.

A few weeks later my wife and I were on our way to Philadelphia to catch a rock concert. We left early so that I could spend some time checking out the locales around Downingtown. I met the owner of "The Blob" diner, and he gave me a tour of the place and showed me stills from the movie. Later I met Wes Shank the keeper of the Blob. I even met the Blob! I attended the fortieth anniversary party for the Blob in Downingtown. I was coming to terms with this monster and helping put to rest anxieties from my childhood.

It didn't take long for people to realize the Blob was a local treasure. Soon the Blob's popularity began to skyrocket. The diner's ownership changed hands and the new owner did not want anything to do with the Blob, but you can't kill that monster. I told you before.

Soon the theater in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, that played such an important role in the movie began to host Blob festivals.

It took me thirty years to come to terms with this monster. *The Blob* still gives me shivers a little, but I think that's my inner child still dealing with anticipated fear rather than the real thing.



FILMS THAT SCARRED US FOR LIFE:

THE GHOST & MR. CHICKEN OR THE STRANGE CASE OF POLTERGEIST AND POULTRYGEIST

By KEVIN SEAN MICHAELS

2005. A fan. Somewhere in New Jersey . . .
"I couldn't help overhearing, but did you say you directed *Poltergeist*?"
"No, it's called *Poultrygeist*, like the chicken."
"Oh." The fan sighs.

Troma president (and creator of the *Toxic Avenger*) Lloyd Kaufman looked like a deflated bicycle tire. The play on words might not be as funny as it was back in the comedy think tank. Now he was stuck with it. He was making the damn movie with his own money.

At horror conventions, fans rise and fall on what they might see, or who they might meet, or what they may find in what seems like a post-apocalyptic hell of t-shirts, bootlegs and worn-out celebrities. In this twilight zone, a fan thought he had come face-to-face with someone that would connect him with his horror past. Tobe Doo, where are you?

No, Lloyd didn't direct *Poltergeist*. And sitting next to him, I was starting to wonder if I was going to be part of his *Poultrygeist* movie, whether I'd regret it. I would spend the rest of my career explaining that is *Poultrygeist*, not *Poltergeist*.

My 2005 mind wandered, as it so often does at conventions. My mind flashed to the 1982 classic that was *Poltergeist*, and how much it meant to me then, and still does today.

I am STILL terrified of that snowy blank screen, the "other" dimension in the walls, and the creepy midgot lady, Tangina . . . "Carol Anne . . . Don't go into the light!"

I was also petrified of ZZ Top, Alti, and Orko from He-Man. Go figure. Films that scared us as kids seem to morph like a Power Ranger over time. Were Power Rangers around in 1982? It doesn't matter. My point is, age has a lot to do with perception.

There are many films that don't pack the same punch now as they did when we saw them in our younger days. Watching *The Exorcist* in re-release, I can't believe I thought bulimia was scary!

Poltergeist scared me for life. Keep in mind that I haven't seen the film since it played in theaters in 1982. I bought the DVD this summer in Toronto and had the real director sign it, Mr. Tobe Hooper, and since I have made a pact with myself to never watch it, I can't ruin the memories. *Poltergeist* struck a lot of chords with my young brain. Number one was the appearance of actor James Karen as Mr. Teague, the real estate broker. At the time, I knew nothing of Mr. Karen's long career in film. To me, he was the Pathmark guy, barking out what was on sale for supermarket customers on local New York TV stations.

In *Poltergeist*, Karen has gone from coupon clipper to Jack the Ripper, selling to the young Freeling couple a house with a deadly secret (no, it's not high property taxes).

Craig T. Nelson (who I can only picture as "Coach") and JoBeth Williams (who I caught in an episode of *Dexter* recently) play the parents of Carol Anne, the creepiest daughter since little Rhoda (Patty McCormack) in *The Bad Seed*. Heather O'Rourke portrays Carol Anne.

Her character freaked me out. In retrospect, what makes Heather's story even more bizarre is that she died of cardiac arrest at age twelve. This is another reason I'm reluctant to revisit my *Poltergeist* DVD. I know—I'm a wimp.

Back to the Freeling family . . . they're doing fine with their new purchase, until it seems like they are not the only inhabitants living in the lovely abode. Seems like some ghosts were occupying the haunted house that the Freulings decided to move into. And the old tenants weren't looking for company!

Bad things start to happen. The ghosts are ANGRY.



I'm sure most Screen readers are familiar with *Poltergeist*. And if you've never seen the film—buy it, rent it, do whatever you can to get your hands on it. Pop it in late at night and thank me for your nightmares.

No question, Tobe Hooper is a genius. He was able to take a Steven Spielberg film and make it SCARY. After seeing this great ghost story, I couldn't sleep for months afterward. If my dad left the snowy TV on for just a few seconds, I would yell for him to SHUT IT OFF!

Although I am tempted to take the shrink wrap off my *Poltergeist* DVD, I feel that it may unleash some memories that still give me goose bumps to this day.

Perhaps it is better to just store the scare.

I hear director Vadim Perelman (*House of Sand and Fog*), is going to remake *Poltergeist*. Vadim, could you remake *Poultrygeist* instead?



FILMS THAT SCARR'D US FOR LIFE:

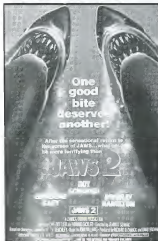
JAWS

BY MICHAEL THOMASON

Whilst "Scarred for Life" was the title of one of iconic Australian blues-rockers, Rose Tattoo, most memorable pub anthems, by cruel twist of irony it is perhaps the best description of this Aussie's long-time (deliberately distant) relationship with that other Pacific icon, the great white shark, and a certain little film from the seventies by (then hitherto non-iconic) film director Steven Spielberg. However, to truly understand the profound effect that Mr. Spielberg and his three mechanical mates, collectively known as "Bruce," had on this (infrequent) genre-film reviewer over the years, it's maybe best to cast our gaze back to the nineteen-seventies themselves and my global positioning.

Though I was born in rural Wheat belt Western Australia, in 1973 at the princely age of five my family moved to the Southwestern coastal town of Albany. At that juncture in time, one of Albany's primary industries was its whaling station, which inturn led the waters of the port town to be something of a haven to all manner of roaming predators, most notably the great white shark (or white pointers, as we termed them). However, Albany had always been a seafaring haunt for sharks; as early as 1889 there had been historical record of a nine-meter shark being caught in one of its harbors, 1896 brought record of one of two fishermen being taken by our pointy-nosed friend and come 1925 the grisly record was made of post-mortem on a two-meter shark's belly disgorging a whole human arm! As anyone could see, quite the history to capture, stir and more than a little terrify a very young mind.

Come late 1975, and just in time for the Western Australian summer (which stems from December 1st through February's end of the following year), the worldwide cinematic phenomenon that was Steven Spielberg's box-office swallowing event picture, *Jaws*, hit Australian shores. Back in those days event movies initiated media bonanzas! Newsagencies were flooded with shark books, magazines and photo-foldout poster-books; Peter Benchley's novel was repackaged with the iconic poster art of Spielberg's film, as well as proliferated most friends' parents' bookshelves; and, a deluge of shark-themed programming hit the free-to-air (in the days before pay TV) television networks. *Jaws* was a monster movie of literally enormous proportions. Yet, though school friends, and even my babysitter, had all seen the monster shark epic (to reports of adults both cowering in terror and running screaming from cinema seats), one little eight year old was forbidden from seeing Mr. Spielberg's "horrifying" movie: me.



You see, unlike our U.S. and U.K. cousins, the Australian censors had found the overall intensity of *Jaws* to be too strong for viewers under fifteen and it was awarded an M rating. Somewhat ironically, having seen whales flensed at our whaling station and witnessed sharks thrashing about in an ocean awash with blood for scraps of whale-meat, as well as being allowed to watch television documentaries that showed the often gruesome aftermath of real shark attacks, I was censored of seeing *Jaws* himself. In hindsight, perhaps this was one of my parents' wiser decisions amidst years of vetting my viewing. By late November 1978, my father relented and we went to the drive-in to see Jeannot Szwarc's follow-up, *Jaws 2*. As a ten year old, even though I had not seen Spielberg's original, Szwarc's film still achieved the desired effect and it wasn't until my teens that I managed to shake the image of the shark's attack on the downed helicopter, even if it was a complete stretch of believability.

At fifteen, the great white returned again, only this time he came at me in 3D when Joe Alves' *Jaws 3D* hit cinemas in Australia once again coinciding perfectly with a summer release. Yes it made me jump out of my seat in parts, and yes it brought back memories of my many encounters with the great white shark over the years, inclusive of seeing one of the great behemoths firsthand back in '75 when one Collin Ostle landed a five-meter great white off the coast of my home town. By the time *Jaws: The Revenge* (1987) landed in cinemas, for what would be the great white's last time, circa summer of the same year, I was old enough to finally go back and track down Steven Spielberg's original to see what all the fuss had been about, why it had spawned three sequels, and if it still held up as well today as it did thirteen years prior.

The terrifying motion picture from the terrifying No. 1 best seller.

JAWS



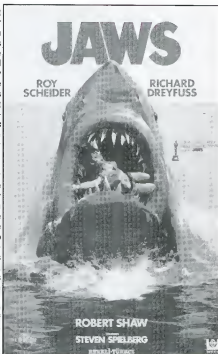
ROY SCHEIDER ROBERT SHAW RICHARD DREYFUSS
JAWS

Directed by STEVEN SPIELBERG
Produced by ROBERT WALSH
Screenplay by CAROL COOPER
Based on the novel by PETER BENCHLEY
Music by JOHN WILLIAMS
Casting by JUDITH M. SHERMAN
Production Designers: JAMES H. HANCOCK, JAMES H. HANCOCK
Executive Producers: JAMES H. HANCOCK, JAMES H. HANCOCK
Producers: JAMES H. HANCOCK, JAMES H. HANCOCK
Director of Photography: VICTOR ALFARO
Editor: VICTOR ALFARO
Production Office: JAMES H. HANCOCK
Dolby Stereo
© 1975 Universal Studios, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Australian daybill for *Jaws*.

Having unsettling memories of my father's fishing stories, of great looming shadows that passed under fishing dinghies only to prove longer than the boat itself, as well as having lived a very young part of my life in a town whose primary industry had been whaling (up until the Cheynes Beach Whaling Station was decommissioned in 1978), the threat of the great white shark and its place in the vast ocean at large had always held a somewhat unpleasant corner of my subconscious in its grip most of my life. However, at the age of twenty, what harm could a monster movie from 1975, of which I had already read the book, hope to have on me? As it turned out, Spielberg's film probably made the most marked effect out of all of the *Jaws* films on me than any other; much akin to my mid-twenties first encounter with William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (1973), *Jaws* left such an indelible mark on me that it still manages to unsettle, scare and frighten me almost to the point of raising a cold sweat, nearly twenty years on from that first viewing.

Up until its larger-than-life *Moby Dick* inspired finale, *Jaws* is nearly everything the perfect horror film could ever hope to be. Right from the outset it keeps its antagonist hidden from the audience, with only cursory glimmers of fins or menacing point-of-view shots along with John Williams' unforgettable score, which serves to make the threat all the more frightening as it is intangible to its viewer, lurking within the imagination as to what might be below the waves and in turn giving rise to an insurmountable sense of growing terror. *Jaws* was, and still is, a white-knuckle viewing experience for this viewer; for as the suspense builds and the tension heightens like an ever-tightening wire with each attack, until the sheer magnitude of *Jaws'* sea-bound predator is revealed, it lurks in the deeper recesses of your imagination, magnified by a terror of the unknown and exacerbated by the tangible reality of the oceans we all know and enjoy our summer vacations amongst. The placement of the unconscionable within the realms of the real makes the fright factor of *Jaws* all the more threatening and far more terrifying than (the scientific) reality.



Even today, at the age of forty and upon a recent screening of the Spielberg classic, I found myself suddenly feeling tense and ill at ease when Richard Dreyfuss took to the water to investigate Ben Gardner's seemingly abandoned boat, gasped with quiet fright at Roy Scheider's surprise on the *Orca* while doling out offal into the ocean to lure the shark, felt nervous and unsettled by Robert Shaw's tale of the *USS Indianapolis*, and succumbed to cold chills up my spine when Dreyfuss took to the murky depths again in the shark cage at the finale. *Jaws* holds its power across the decades, even if some of its special effects may seem dated now, because it invests itself with believably written characters caught up in an altogether plausible situation and swims along on a current of ever mounting suspense and dread that manage to explode in an almost apocalyptic climax.

Though volumes of research and information has come to the surface since its cinematic debut about its central character, what makes *Jaws* the film special is that central character is such an unstoppable force of nature, of which little was known at the time, that it gives the great white shark an almost mythological, supernatural presence.

Man's fear of the unknown, especially when that unknown is grounded in reality, is far more frightening than that of something tangible and definable. Assuredly, my own personal background and placement adds immeasurably to the mythos of the *Jaws* legend, as the monster has always been attainable and tangible to me throughout my formative years and adult life. But between witnessing a shark launch its body out of the water to take down a chunk of whale-meat from a fishing gaff, to steadfastly keeping an eye on the annual coastal shark attacks in my own part of the Southern Hemisphere (seven off the Australian coast alone up 'til February 7, 2009), there will always be that subliminal stop-sign that prevents me from wading past waist deep water at the beach. And somewhere behind that stop-sign, just out of sight in the darkened depths, lays Peter Benchley's creation and the beast given life in Steven Spielberg's monster hit.



FILMS THAT SCARRED US FOR LIFE:

TOURIST TRAP

BY PHIL AVELLI

I was thirteen when I was scared for life by a film. I remember holding a flashlight for my dad, which was the extent of my electrical maintenance lessons, while he laid on the floor behind a small coffee table we had set up for my first TV set. This was in actuality the old set from my parents' bedroom. They had bought a bigger one for themselves so I inherited the original. I really didn't care that it was an old, beat-up TV, I was about to be given my own portal to the world, and I had Guide for most of the weekend. I could see myself in my room, watching "whatever I wanted"—no more compromising with my younger brother and sister, which meant no more Monchichi's for me! My dad turned it on to test it. The picture was clear as crystal; he smiled, messed up my hair and let me at it.

I'd say it was about a minute after I heard him walk down the stairs that I started messing with the UHF channel knob. One of my friends at school had told me if you turn the knob to a certain channel you WILL see boobs. This he said with such conviction that I thought he was totally on to something, so while I was testing his theory, I found a channel that did indeed have reception, I'm still not sure what that channel was, but I heard some funny, almost cartoon-like music over opening credits and the main title came up—*Tourist Trap*. Having no idea what this movie was but knowing the potential to see some boobs might present itself, I stayed right there in front of that set.

Tourist Trap scared the crap out of me. I had just become a teenager and I think the scariest thing I saw at that point was *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein*. I didn't realize what Mr. Slausen (Chuck Connors) and his "friends" had in store for me. I think the first death scene with Woody in the garage surprised me so much I didn't know what to do. I thought for about five seconds that I should tell my parents but then I was thinking back to those fictitious boobs I was channel surfing for, I had to stay the course.

I was afraid but completely engrossed with the film watching this group of teenagers, which included a pre-*Charlie's Angels* Tanya Roberts, get pulled deeper and deeper into Mr. Slausen's trap. By the time the first girl is killed by Slausen's "brother" by choking her out with telekinesis, I had completely forgotten about my pubescent search for breasts and caught myself talking to the screen. "What are you doing? Why did you even go in there!?"

If I had to pick the one scene that really did me in, it would be when Molly (Jocelyn Jones) is running through the woods, attempting to escape, and Slausen appears behind her in full mask and blonde wig, holding a dolls head. He holds out the head and shouts, "See my friend!" The thing screams a long, painful scream right into the camera. I have never forgotten that scene. Over time I had forgotten the title of the movie and who was in it, but that scene was burned into my brain. Not that the screaming head scene was the only one that stuck with me, any and all of the scenes, where the mannequins moved with those lifeless eyes and sang out as their mouths dropped open, freaked me out.

The film pulled me in and didn't let go until it was through with me. I guess the irony is that in my search for mature material on the UHF channels, I found the one horror film made in those recent years that had no nude scenes.

Tourist Trap to me is a perfect mix between *Psycho* and *Carrie*, which is a great combination. I just recently watched the film again as a refresher and I still believe it holds up as a great horror movie. It's still creepy, and it was made just at the tail end of the seventies before the gloss of eighties horror pictures took over.

For years afterwards if I found myself in a department store, I would look at mannequins with a suspicious eye. I knew it was ridiculous . . . but you can never be too careful.

Phil co-writes for *Lazlo's Closet*, a movie blog that celebrates films from the good to the so-bad it's better. Visit his site at www.lazloscloset.blogspot.com. When not writing or illustrating, Phil works for Ryko Distribution as a film and music marketing manager.



FILMS THAT SCARRED US FOR LIFE:

DON'T BE AFRAID OF THE DARK

By DAVID WILT

Although virtually a lost form today (except for the Sci-Fi and Lifetime cable originals), the "made for TV movie" flourished in the 1970s. There are inherent formal differences between theatrical (and direct-to-video) productions and TV movies. Films made for television not only had to adhere to network TV's strict "standards and practices" censorship (although occasionally they slipped up, remember the "rape by bathroom toilet" in 1974's *Born Innocent*?), TV movies were viewed at home, alone or in small groups rather than in a darkened theatre with a large audience, and they were interrupted every 15 minutes or so by commercials for cars, household products, and beer! These circumstances would seem to make TV movies a less-than-optimum venue for horror, but in fact many of the best-known 1970s made-for-TV productions fall into this genre. *The Night Stalker*, *The Night Stranger*, *Duel*, *Trilogy of Terror*, *The Dead Don't Die*, *Gargoyles* anyone?

Don't Be Afraid of the Dark, judging from user comments on Amazon and IMDb, made a great impression on TV viewers when originally aired on October 10, 1973. Many of these people saw the film as adolescents and their memories of being terrified are understandable. I was a freshman in college when *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* was first broadcast and thus my reaction was different (in fact, since my childhood film going was skewed heavily towards Disney product—thanks to my parents—the only time I can remember being scared by the media as a child was by a commercial for *Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol*, with its sinister, chain-dragging Marley's ghost!). Unlike younger viewers, I didn't have nightmares about tiny creatures lurking in the basement of my house; instead, the film—and particularly its conclusion—produced a sense of psychological unease. Revisiting the film more than 25 years after its initial broadcast, I find *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* retains its creepy atmosphere although its flaws are perhaps more obvious.

Curiously, *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark*—despite its cult reputation—was not made by any of the famous "names" associated with the other TV horror movies (Dan Curtis, Richard Matheson, Robert Bloch, Curtis Harrington, et al.). It was directed by John Newland, remembered today for his work on the *One Step Beyond* anthology series, but who otherwise seems to have been a journeyman director of TV series episodes. The script was by another relative unknown, Nigel McKean and the cast includes the usual TV-movie mix of minor and/or former "name" actors from theatrical films (Kim Darby, Jim Hutton) and TV performers (William Demarest, Barbara Anderson). The three sinister creatures—outfitted in goniola suits, their heads resembling carved walnuts—were played by veteran little person performers Felix Silla ("Cousin It" on *The Addams Family*), Tamara De Treaux, and Patty Maloney. In retrospect, while the creatures are appropriately bizarre and threatening in appearance, the illusion of smallness is not maintained effectively at all times and keeping them off-screen more would probably have improved the film.



(above) The Farnhams (Jim Hutton, Kim Darby) discuss the pitter-patter of tiny feet.

(top right) Maybe you should be afraid of the dark!
(right) A rare glimpse of the things that go bump in the night.



After a teaser opening (mysterious off-screen voices whispering about when "she" will arrive, over shots of an old house), *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* introduces young married couple Alex and Sally Farnham, who are renovating the mansion she inherited from her grandmother. Alex is an ambitious attorney and most of his attention is directed towards his impending partnership, to be finalized with a dinner party in their new home. Sally is working with interior decorator Francisco

and handyman Harris to make the house presentable by this date. She's intrigued by a locked room on a lower level; upon gaining entry, she makes plans to turn it into a study, but is puzzled by the broken-up fireplace. Despite the objections of Harris and her husband, Sally removes the bolts on the ash-room access plate and sees... nothing. However, that night, some little... things ("Free! Free!") emerge from the fireplace. At first, Sally suspects mice are prowling around the house; she later spots furry, wizened creatures but her husband passes this off as the result of "nerves." On the night of the dinner party, Sally tries to control herself, but screams when one of the creatures snatches her napkin from her lap! Her "hysterical" naturally irritates Alex, but he agrees to give up their plans to renovate the house and move out—*almost* he returns from a quick trip to San Francisco. Uh oh! This leaves Sally alone with the trio of miniature monsters. Long story short, the gremlins kill the interior decorator, Sally gets a dose of sleeping pills, friend Joan and hubby Alex are locked out of the mansion, and a helpless Sally is trusted up and dragged down to the depths of Hell or whatever lies in the void beneath the fireplace.

This ending is still powerful and was even more so in 1973. It not only contradicts the typical Hollywood happy ending—evil vanquished, the protagonists safe and sound at the conclusion—it is also at odds with the then-rare (but now more common) unhappy ending in which the hero/heroine is killed (think *Night of the Living Dead*). At least death brings some closure to the plot, but *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark* suggests an eternity of torment or at least entrapment in the netherworld for Sally (the voice-over at the conclusion indicates she has "joined" the creatures, whether alive or dead we do not know). The final minutes of the movie, as the helpless woman is dragged off to an unspecified fate, are quite compelling. What are they going to do to her? In an earlier scene, one of the creatures fondles a straight razor and expresses his desire to hurt or kill Sally, only to be dissuaded by a companion ("But I want to," the monster complains).



Don't Be Afraid of the Dark makes the viewer realize that perhaps death is not the worst that can happen to you. This is a rather subversive and quite unsettling message, even if the film's conclusion is vague rather than explicit. As a result, the film works on several levels, the obvious "little monsters under the bed" concept which has scared many adolescents since 1973, and the "existential-horror" theme which is frightening on another plane.



FILMS THAT SCARRED US FOR LIFE: NITE LITES AND EIGHTIES FRIGHTS

BY AARON GRAHAM

Growing up, my parents never held any restrictive measures over the sorts of films I was allowed to watch—up until a point, as any slight bit of nudity caused a panicked race to find the VCR remote for some “close-your-eyes-as-I-fast-forward” action.

But overall, R-rated fare could freely pass by my eyes uncut, and I directly credit this liberty to view virtually anything (to tolerate, within reason: no erotica or porn) to my interest in cinema, horror and otherwise.

Being able to watch such a gore-saturated film like *Re-Animator* (Stuart Gordon, 1985) didn't leave me disturbed, but it did instill a burgeoning interest in special effects and the curious question of why it was so effective, when so many other gore-laden enterprises from the late 1980s were largely unremarkable.

Still, I was young, impressionable, and a “scaredy cat,” so the freedom inherent in the above paragraphs didn't prepare me for the various nightmares I'd soon rack up watching so many genre films at such early ages as six or seven.

Which leads me to my separation of the two types of scarring: There are the films with particularly well-handled eerie sequences that would serve to jolt the living daylights out of me (I'll get to those in a moment), and then there are the films that suddenly turned on me, with unexpected sex scenes out of nowhere while the remote remained just out of reach (for I trained myself to fast-forward even when watching R-rated films alone)—just as my parents came in.

Those latter examples could be considered to have left more deeply-rooted psychological after effects than even the best-directed horror sequence.

And they didn't even have to be in the horror, sci-fi, or fantasy genre.

I can clearly recall feeling like a degenerate pervert at age eight over a viewing of the Jean-Claude Van Damme action opus, *Double Impact* (Sheldon Letich, 1991), as my mom scurried into the room during the film's one brief nude scene to usher a scolding. Now, of course she knew what she was getting into in allowing me to see it in the first place (she should have checked the back of the VHS box beforehand), but the sheer shock of being yelled at for not fast-forwarding quick enough constitutes as a grade A scarring experience for me. Trivial and humorous today, but for the first few years after it happened, it was more frightening to consider than Jerry Dandridge moving in next door.

Then there are the films that made me sleep with the lights on night after night, those unnerving moments in horror cinema that freaked me out so much that I couldn't walk up the winding, wooden staircase to my bedroom unless—*a*) someone “coached” me at the bottom of the stairs, or *b*) went up to switch the lights on. The fact that my house was once a funeral parlor only enhanced and compounded the shocks I received.

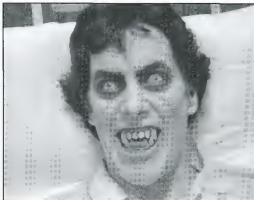
So, without further adieu, here's a (very eighties-centric) list:

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2 (Tobe Hooper, 1986)

A film I only increasingly admire over the years for the way it completely inverts the original's scenario, recharging the palpable, experimental horror found in the first in order to make it a black comedy. The moment that really unhinged me was the radio station sequence in which Leatherface's equally as psychologically unsound brother, Chip Top (Bill Moseley), demanded our plucky heroine (Caroline Williams) play the soundtrack recording to one such massacre. I think I baled when Leatherface charged through a darkened doorway.

An American Werewolf in London (John Landis, 1981)

I was perfectly fine with all of the werewolf stuff, so expertly designed and constructed by Rick Baker, but the Bunuel-esque “Nightmare Demon” sequence, where a group of hideously deformed arbiters of Nazism charged through the Kessler family home, frightened me terribly. I think it had something to do with disrupting the fabric of comfortable domesticity—the fact that *The Muppet Show* (a nod to Landis' pal, Frank Oz) emitted from the television set only made it more hyperrealistic to my image of home life.



The Twilight Zone: "The Shadow Man" (Joe Dante, 1985)

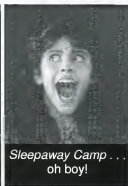
"I Am The Shadow Man, and I will never harm the person under whose bed I live." The best segment of the revamped 80s incarnation of *The Twilight Zone* was also the most genuinely creepy and upsetting to me. In it, a pre-adolescent (Jonathan Ward) makes an unspoken deal with the shadowed embodiment of ramped-up bully rage: The figure did battle against our hero's enemies for only so long before the boy became too cocky, becoming the personage he once resented and the adversary for another boy.

Greepshow II (Michael Gornick, 1987)

The last story of this three-part anthology forced me and a friend out onto the lawn in broad daylight. Lois Chiles (Dr. Holly Goodhead of *Moonraker* fame) is an adulteress who hits a homeless man on her way home from her lover's place; the revivified corpse comes back to haunt her in a number of scare tactics, uttering the phrase, “Thanks for the ride, lady!” as Les Reed's score delivers a series of successful stings. It worked on me.



**LARGE
MARGE!**



**Sleepaway Camp . . .
oh boy!**

Sleepaway Camp (Robert Hiltzik, 1983)

Anyone who's seen it will know what scene “scared” me: it's the last one in the picture.

Pee-wee's Big Adventure (Tim Burton, 1985)

The worst offender in my book—oh, how I laughed and chorled with Pee-wee Herman, being such a big fan of his children's television show (being unaware of the adult-themed humor in the original HBO special).

And then it happened: In pitch-darkness, Pee-wee hops into the trucker of one *Large Marge* (Alice Nunn), and as Danny Elfman's seminal score provides perfect backing, begins to listen to one hell of a monologue about a car accident seen years previous. The stop-motion animation was only going on the cake—and my light stayed on for months.



FILMS THAT SCARRED US FOR LIFE: THRILLED, HAPPY, AND SCARED TO DEATH! BY GLENN ERICKSON

Some scars are meant to be worn proudly. The films that scarred me for life left their marks roughly between the age of seven and eleven. It was the late 1950s, and the afternoons spent cowering in the dark corners of movie theaters have become cherished memories. I was an Air Force brat raised on military bases where I was shielded from harsh realities; childhood was happy, complacent and squeaky-clean. Our front door was often left open, unlocked. At age seven I could wander my utterly secure neighborhood at will. The only thing my environment lacked was excitement.

I soon discovered that the Base Movie Theater changed films five times a week, and showed nearly everything. I certainly didn't understand that movies were projected from film; I thought that some kind of magic was appearing on the screen. My mother would give me a princely dime for admission and six pennies for the machine that dispensed dry, tasteless popcorn; the theater had no concession stand. As long as I didn't have nightmares, I could choose what I wanted to see. I often went alone, because my parents had no intention of sitting through *Teenagers from Outer Space* or *Missile to the Moon*. I became an expert observer of ray guns that "blasted flesh off the bones" and deadly sunlight that cooked astronauts to a crisp. These things weren't scary, they were fun.

My parents did apply some rather arbitrary rules. I realized later that the movies I wasn't allowed to see were ones that advertised sex, about which I was ridiculously ignorant. The gruesome *The Mummy* was okay, but *The Brides of Dracula* was nixed, probably because the posters hinted at adult content. *Village of the Damned* not only had the "D" word, its TV spot promised monster children with unknown fathers. I stared at the posters for *The Tangler*, *Jack the Ripper* and *Psycho*, wondering what taboo content they might contain.

What scared me? There were no hard and fast rules. Ordinary jeopardy was no problem, especially after a steady diet of violent cartoons at special Saturday shows. This was a secret childhood cinema in that I didn't talk much about with my parents, for fear that my movie privileges would be revoked if they knew I was watching movies about severed heads (*The Four Skulls of Jonathan Drake*). I was like Ralphie, the kid in *A Christmas Story*, except I had daydreams wondering what it might feel like to have my tongue ripped out, as I saw happen in *The Mummy*. Also, seeing all these films made me practically a celebrity on the second-grade schoolyard. "You saw that? Jeez?" That kind of status was beyond price.

I related to the screen in an almost unconscious way. In 1959 there was little opportunity to see much in the way of real gore, but the suggestion of mayhem conjured grisly—but innocent—mental images. It would be years before I could stand back and see these films for what they were. Gorgo's giant head burst from the waves, its eye glowing red, and I was in rapture. Long before I knew who Bernard Herrmann was, the unbelievably low organ notes in *Journey to the Center of the Earth* made me feel like I was sinking to the center of the earth, personally.

The movies that scarred me were few, but they're etched permanently on my brain. Watching the trailer for *Atomic Submarine*, I was traumatized by a brief glimpse of some giant pale fleshy thing stretching across the screen, smoking and sizzling. I couldn't figure out what it was, and to find out, I had to wait a week to see the movie. I watched, afraid that the image was going to pop up and scare me again. As it turned out, I had completely misread the shot. It was a close-up of a man's hand smoking under the heat from an alien ray. In the context of the movie, it wasn't scary at all.



Catiki, the Immortal Monster was another kettle of acid altogether. I remember looking up the word "immortal" and being dumbfounded at the idea that, whatever Catiki was, it couldn't die. The picture was unnerving from beginning to end. I perceived that something wasn't quite right with the dubbed voices but that weirdness only made the movie seem more nightmarish. I was old enough to follow the storyline completely, and reacted (probably overreacted) to every diabolical turn of plot: Don't go into that pool again, it'll get you for sure!

Catiki only had to touch you, and you'd dissolve. The shot of a slice of Catiki being pulled back from Karl's skeletonized arm elicited a collective gasp from the audience. I was utterly convinced that it was real. The huge, sticky mass breaking down doors seemed to be trying to eat me, personally. I remember the skull-faces of the half-consumed victims, gulping their last breath and staring at me, as if saying, "You're next! I'm sure my eyes must have been bugging out, too.

I white-knuckled the whole Catiki experience. The 6-cent popcorn machine had broken down, so I watched the movie gripping the armrest with one hand and clenching my unspent pennies in the other. Eighty minutes later, I had been transported into a new dimension of excitement. . . . I walked home in a daze, shivering. When I put the change down, I saw that my entire hand was covered with a shiny brown residue. I must have screamed, because my parents came running. For a few seconds I was convinced that Catiki was devouring me. Dad explained that the salt in my perspiration had dissolved some of the copper or zinc from the pennies, and I calmed down.

On the other side of the world, a certain Italian filmmaker was probably smiling at the thought of thousands of kids just like me terrified by his handiwork.

By age ten I was living in a normal civilian neighborhood and taking buses downtown to see movies. I remember being unnerved by the Cyclops in *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* (a reissue). The growling, grinning monster was scary because it was so grotesquely ugly. It obviously was not a man in a suit, like the fun *Gigantis, the Fire Monster*. Because the Cyclops could not be explained away, on some level I must have thought it was real. I saw few gruesome horror films, preferring to save my money for movies about monsters and outer space. Besides, most of the scary-looking horror films played exclusively at drive-ins, which were out of my reach.

Most of my nightmares were about movies I didn't see. Our local paper didn't post movie reviews; we went to see movies totally on the basis of advertising. I remember staring at the newspaper ads for *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* with the graphic image of the doll with half its head broken away. That picture was scary just by itself. Likewise, I wanted to see *Mr. Sardonicus* until *Famous Monsters* published a photo of the horrible, grinning main character. The sight of that scary face was so disturbing, I used paper clips so that I wouldn't accidentally open the magazine to that page.

Every weekday at the breakfast table I'd watch a local TV show called *Zoo-rama*, hoping that they'd show alligators or lizards. When the show ended one Monday, the TV screen was suddenly filled with fluttering bird wings accompanied by an arresting sound effect. It lasted about 15 seconds, and then another commercial came on. On Tuesday the strange black wings appeared again, with some added element, perhaps a title reading, "WHAT ARE THEY?" or "WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?" I was hooked. The spots got longer, each day showing a little more. Finally, a blonde woman ran through a door and shouted, "THEY'RE COMING!" On Friday the title "The Birds" finally came on the screen, and I knew I had to see the movie. The next morning I was on the bus, heading to a matinee.

Calitiki had been a thrill but *The Birds* pulled my eleven-year-old mind in several directions simultaneously. This was different than anything I'd seen before. Years later I read Robin Wood's book on Alfred Hitchcock and realized that the director's technique had played my impressionable brain like a musical instrument. All I knew when watching *The Birds* is that I was part of the movie, that everything happening on screen was happening to ME, TOO. Bloody violence might erupt at any second. The "normal" scenes were just a tease, because the hordes of pecking birds were sure to return when I least expected them.



The images were inseparable from my nightmares. The more I concentrated, the scarier the film became. When the lady stares at the row of broken teacups, a deep sense of dread hit me—nobody hangs up broken teacups. The dead farmer is revealed in a flutter of shocking static cuts—a wide view of the room that jump cuts forward until we get a close-up of the eyesless corpse. In glaring Technicolor, it was by far the most graphic sight I'd seen to date.

The Birds was a case of shock following shock. Each suspense set piece was traumatic: I could see horrible events coming but was helpless to prevent them. A man burns to death in a parking lot, even after being warned. Tippi Hedren is unaware of the crows massing on the monkey bars only a few feet away. It doesn't matter who you are—a little kid or Suzanne Pleshette—the birds will get you.

Even worse, attempts to organize against the bird attacks go nowhere. The people in the bar just argue and the idiot sheriff refuses to accept the facts in front of his eyes. It was my first exposure to the notion that the adult world could be suicidally wrongheaded. All we have to rely on is ourselves. That's a scary revelation, when one has been brought up in such a protective atmosphere.

I think I watched most of the movie in a trance. The big attack on the house had me in a cold sweat, with the rising roar of the "bird storm" on the soundtrack. The only birds I could see were the orange beaks pecking their way through a solid oak door... so they could kill ME. *The Birds* had me, mentally speaking, in complete survival mode.



In the calm of the morning, thousands of birds cover the entire landscape. How can the people sneak away, and where can they possibly be safe? Could the normal, secure world (like the one I knew) be completely overturned like this, without warning? This was a different kind of horror, a more adult kind of insecurity.

When the car drives away into that final shot, and the birds just sit there, I think I had my first experience with cinematic art. I couldn't believe the film was ending. It seemed like the shot just hung there, with nothing happening, forever. By the way, I'll swear to this day that no "The End" title appeared, just a Universal logo, up in one corner of the screen. When the theater house lights came up, I couldn't believe the show had ended. For me, it was still happening—the danger was still there.

This time, I wandered out of the theater and looked around, literally re-adjusting myself to normal reality—blue skies, buildings, there's the bus coming. It would be a long time before I could even begin to coherently express what *The Birds* had been like. Alfred Hitchcock had permanently warped my brain. I went home, ready to scour next Wednesday's newspaper to see what NEW miracle movie would be playing next!

Glenn Erickson is a film editor and movie critic for Turner Classic Movies Online and has been reviewing movies at his own DVD Savant site (www.dvdsavant.com) since 1997. He's completing a collection of Science Fiction reviews.



FILMS THAT SCARRED US FOR LIFE: KILLER KLOWNS FROM OUTER SPACE BY MIKE SULLIVAN

I didn't like horror movies as a child. It wasn't because I found them to be scary (I did), it was because they lacked two important elements: stuffed animal parades and scenes from the Broadway smash *Annie*. If I managed to watch anything horror-related, it was usually by accident. For example, when I was about four years old, my brother and I visited a neighbor's house. As I entered the living room, I noticed that

somebody had carelessly left a View-Master lying on the floor. As I absently picked it up, I had no idea that I would soon be face to face with the pants-wetting visage of a decaying Michael Jackson. Why the hell did View-Master release a *Thriller* disk? Was this part of some "Deep Emotional Scars" series that included selected scenes from *Faces of Death* and Pasolini's *Salo*? Whatever the case may be, the tears and urine flowed almost immediately—and continued long after my brother ushered me out of the house, and away from the terror of 3-D imagery. It was a harrowing experience, but the worst was yet to come.



Mike has no problem with *Salo*'s tongue removal scene . . .

Four years later, a more emotionally damaging incident occurred at my grandfather's house. I was idly channel surfing when I came upon the sight of two silly clowns wreaking havoc in a drug store. Now, I should point out that I wasn't one of those kids that were afraid of clowns. In fact, I absolutely adored clowns, which probably explains why I didn't seem to notice that these particular clowns resembled pale, alopecia riddled apes. After several minutes of wild buffoonery and mad capering (Ha, ha, they don't know what shaving cream is!), my joy slowly morphed into apprehension as the movie started getting weird.

First, veteran character actor, John Vernon, called one of the bland lead actors "a little fart." Now, for some people (alright, everybody) this wouldn't be a big deal. But fart was one of the 37 words that were forbidden in my house at the time (other forbidden words included crap, hell, bugger, bugaboo, son-of-a-gun and the phrase, "Oh, my God") and hearing someone actually say it wasn't just shocking—it was earth-shattering. Unfortunately, the movie didn't give me a chance to recover from hearing Vernon utter "the other F-bomb" because mere seconds later I watched numbly as a cute pint-sized clown decapitated the leader of an ethnically diverse biker gang with a powerful uppercut.



. . . but *Killer Klowns* still creep him out!

I was terrified. I had never seen anything like this in my life. But for some reason I didn't change the channel. For the next twenty minutes I saw things that would fuel my nightmares in the months to come. There was a motorist who was rammed off the rode by a clown in an invisible motorcycle, a little girl nearly beaten to death by a mallet-wielding clown, a crowd of elderly people eaten alive by a dinosaur shadow puppet, and the laughter, the shrill, garbled, otherworldly laughter that seemed to be exploding out of their gaping, twisted clown-maws. By the time Vernon's corpse was transformed into a ventriloquist dummy, I had to turn

the TV off. It was bad enough that they betrayed my trust in clowns, but ventriloquist dummies? That was simply inexcusable! *Killer Klowns from Outer Space* had single-handedly destroyed my love affair with not only clowns but jesters, jokers, Pagliaccos and Emmett Kelley as well. I tried as best as I could to put the movie out of my mind, but it was impossible. For almost two years those damn clowns haunted me everywhere I went. Whether I was using the school washroom, or visiting the buffet at The Big Wrangler (a terrible, now defunct local rip-off of the equally terrible Bonanza chain), I knew those clowns were watching and waiting for the right moment to drink my blood with a Silly Straw. Ironically, I didn't even know the title of the movie that basically ruined my life. It wouldn't be until years later that I discovered it was called *Killer Klowns from Outer Space*. Stranger still, it wasn't until I was asked to write about scarring horror movie experiences that I actually bothered to re-watch this creepy classic. And you know what? This little fart of a movie still scares the crap out of me.



FILMS THAT SCARRED US FOR LIFE:

GARGOYLES

By LEE PETERSON

I was nine years old in 1972, a Nebraska boy thoroughly obsessed with Bigfoot and the Planet of the Apes movies, and my first brush with the libidinous advances of the cute neighbor girl was still a year away (I was ambivalent, but I played along with her "you show me, I'll show you" games in exchange for letting me shower her with Apes trivia. Seemed like a bargain at the time, although when I finally did become interested in the stuff she had in mind, she'd already moved on to the older neighborhood boys and I was a day late and a dollar short).

The Roger Patterson "Bigfoot" film footage of 1967 was in heavy TV rotation as a seemingly weekly parade of new "documentaries" opened at the local theater. The late-night commercials had me scared to death as I caught a glimpse of the supposed "PROOF THAT THERE ARE GIANT CREATURES LIVING AT THE EDGE OF OUR CIVILIZATION." What to most grown-up eyes looks suspiciously like a guy in a lumpy gorilla suit, never failed to rattle me. I would shake my father awake with screams of, "Dad—IT'S ON!!!!" (I was convinced that Dad was every bit as interested in the big hairy guy as I was—ok, maybe not.) *The Legend of Boggy Creek* had already done its number on me.

Completely and utterly obsessed with the chimp make-ups, (and by extension any film with rubber appliances attached to a face), I filled scrapbooks with newspaper clippings of all things Apes. You could have put an ape mask on a broom and ran around the yard and I would've watched for hours.

In the middle of all this, there was *Gargoyles*.

The promos for the new CBS Tuesday Night Movie of November 21, 1972 promised something eerie and amazing, and there was no question my little ass would be parked in front of the TV that night. This was, of course, a lifetime before the age of home video and (cue the blank stares from the under-30 set) if you missed the show when it aired, you were completely out of luck. Maybe—just maybe, there would be a rerun in six months, but you knew better than to count on it. You had one shot—you snooze you lose (and snooze I did many a night, waking up to the sound of the National Anthem sign-off and cursing myself for being such a pathetic loser). God, could I manage to stay awake until eleven o'clock on a school night? I HAD TO!



I was hooked from the spooky pre-credits sequence, which establishes the gargoyles as descendants of Satan (!) and sets up just enough pseudo-mythological back story to make it seem believable (screenwriters Elinor and Steven Karpf also contributed *Devil Dog: Hound from Hell* to the great pantheon of satanic TV terrors).

Professor Mercer Boley (Cornel Wilde from *The Naked Prey*) is an archaeologist/part-time demonologist writing a book on ancient demonic rituals ("5000 Years of Demonology"). He and his photographer daughter Diana (Jennifer Salt, soon to star in Brian DePalma's *Sisters*) are driving through Arizona on the way to Mexico to research Mayan legends, and take a detour to a roadside tourist trap/museum of oddities run by screwball Uncle Willie (TV veteran Woody Chambliss), who shows them his "discovery"—a skeleton that resembles a man with wings and a horned skull ("It's a concoction of unrelated bones!" scoffs Boley). Their discussion is interrupted by a scary nighttime attack by the gargoyles, who burn down Willie's shack, but not before the Boleys escape with the skeleton's horned skull as proof.

Grayson Hall (*Dark Shadows*) contributes a hammy turn as a horny, tipsy motel owner, and a young Scott Glenn (*The Right Stuff*, *Urban Cowboy*) is a scruffy dirt biker/quasi-love interest for Diana ("a Gar-what?").

Bill L. Norton's direction is taut and mostly adequate, but the real attractions (aside from Jennifer Salt's braless halter tops), are the Emmy Award-winning reptilian creature makeup designed by Ellis Berman, and a young Stan Winston. The King Gargoyle (played by blaxploitation staple Bernie Casey and voiced by Vic Perrin, the *Outer Limits* "Control Voice") sports giant leathery wings (a definite influence of the Creeper in the *Jeepers Creepers* movies). According to some online sources, *Night Court*'s Richard Moll is another (uncredited) gargoyle, but I'll be damned if I can spot him. The gargoyle scenes are over-cranked for a slo-mo effect that either looks really creepy or really goofy, take your pick.

Coincidentally, a rash of sightings of real-life "lizard men" in the swamps of North and South Carolina were reported in 1972. Did the airing of *Gargoyles* influence the sightings, the way that *Boggy Creek* caused a huge spike in Bigfoot sightings the same year? Hmmm . . .

Anyway, I had no trouble staying awake till the end of the movie—in fact I doubt I slept at all that night. Next day at school, I pulled out my spiral notebook and scribbled down every detail I could remember, constructing as best I could a handwritten script, which I somehow corralled my more adventurous third-grade classmates into acting out with me on the playground.

Gargoyles eventually hit VHS and DVD in 2000 from VCL. Both are long out of print, and command the big bucks if you can locate a copy.

My handwritten script is, sadly, lost forever. And Bigfoot, well . . .



FILMS THAT SCARR'D US FOR LIFE:

CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG

BY DANIEL ROEBUCK



The stuff that nightmares are made of! Robert Helpmann is the Child Catcher in Ian Fleming's *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*.

When asked recently to write about the scariest movie of my youth, there wasn't the slightest hesitation as to which motion picture it might be. Granted, I saw countless horror movies as a boy in Bethlehem Pennsylvania. My weekends were spent with horror host Dr. Shock (and his cute child Bubble Booth) as well as Karloff, Price, Lugosi and Chaney!

The film that has always given me the chills starred a car—but it wasn't written by Stephen King. There were ridiculously complex Rube Goldberg style inventions—but it wasn't part of the Saw franchise. The villain of the piece wore black—but he wasn't searching for the "blood of life".

The monster that vexed my youth wasn't portrayed by the Master of Menace (Boris Karloff) or the Minister of all that is Sinister (Vincent Price). It was a fey, nimble ballet dancer wearing a Cyranos proboscis and a Lincoln hat that scared and scarred me the most!

I mean, of course, The Child Catcher in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*!

Australian born ballet dancer, Sir Robert Helpmann, portrayed this fantastic character, born of the same brilliant mind that gave us James Bond, and fleshed out by another brilliant English author, Roald Dahl.

Helpmann, despite his workingman's face, rose to the top of London's Royal Ballet. He danced featured roles for years. As is the norm for professional dancers, his prime-dancing career lasted a little more than a decade. He turned to producing and, thankfully, acting!

It would be nearly 20 years before the dancer was gifted the role that would make him the stuff of nightmares, The Child Catcher.

Who could forget his wiry frame dancing down the cobblestone streets searching for children, his huge nose primed and ready for the slightest scent of an errant adolescent?

Then later in the film, disguised as a candy peddler, The Child Catcher returns to claim his prize of two healthy English children. Creepy stuff, there is no doubt about it.

Looking back now, through the prism of fatherhood, I see the powerful metaphor of this creepy character. No more cinematic boogey man, The Child Catcher is certainly real—just check your local Megan's Law website!

Helpmann created one of the greatest screen villains of all time! With the simple cock of his eyebrow and the turn of his nose, he terrorized me as a boy and haunts me still. Although many monsters inhabit my home and memory, none has done more damage or caused as many sleepless nights as this talented and effete ballet dancer!

Daniel Roebuck has spent the last 25 years building an impressive resume, chock-full of blockbuster films (The Fugitive), kids movies (Agent Cody Banks), horror movies (#12: Halloween 2) and television shows (Matlock). He has portrayed many people, including famous celebrities such as Jay Leno and Garry Marshall. Although he has fulfilled nearly every dream of his childhood—like appearing in Mad Magazine, becoming a Halloween mask and appearing on a few trading cards—Roebuck refuses to retire, despite countless threats, and continues to work as one of Hollywood's busiest character actors!

Please visit www.danielroebuck.com for more information on all things Dan.



FILMS THAT SCARRED US FOR LIFE: THE EXORCIST BY EMMA WESTWOOD

"Do you know what she did, your cuntin' daughter."

That's not so much a direct question as a shocking piece of rhetoric posed by the Devil (aka Captain Howdy) in William Friedkin's masterstroke of 1973, *The Exorcist*.

Imagine an eleven-year-old girl—unsupervised and attracted to the 'high' of fear, as most children are inclined—slipping a VHS cassette into the player and hearing such an evocative expletive fly. At that time in my life, I'd only just been introduced to 'motherf***er' courtesy of Bette Midler in *The Rose*, let alone such adjectives as 'cuntin',' which remains under-used even to this day.

In the back cover blurb of my book *Monster Movies*, there is a personal confession (written in the third person): "Her first clandestine viewing of *The Exorcist* at age 11 kicked off a love affair with the horror genre that has placed her in good stead to write *Monster Movies*."

As an only child, I was brought up the daughter of roadside motel proprietors (just like Bates Motel, but without the obvious parallels). For 18 hours or so a day, my parents slaved over a hot restaurant stove, running the front desk and even cleaning rooms, which meant my time was my own and the video collection of our teenage boarder was ripe for my picking.

The year was 1983, a decade after the release of *The Exorcist*, and therefore, a point in time when the said film had already reached legendary status. Even for a young girl—especially one absorbed in cinematic works—its notoriety did not go unrecognized, so to tread on such hallowed ground—to boldly go where very few young girls had gone before—was too exciting a prospect to pass up.

It's hard to recall the blow-by-blow experience of watching the movie, given the passing of years, but once the closing credits commenced, the tape was rewound and played for a second time, my morbid fascination upped to extreme levels. It is important to note, I was watching the original release of *The Exorcist*, although the more contemporary director's cut supervised by Friedkin with extra footage and special effects is even superior.

Considering my child's mind would have possessed the attention span of a gnat, it's intriguing as to what I found intriguing... The pace of *The Exorcist* is considered and judicious, hardly that of the 'cut-out-cut' MTV generation. It opens with a subtitled archaeological dig in Northern Iraq, the first extreme manifestation of demonic possession only occurs approximately 51 minutes into the narrative, Father Karras meets Regan (Linda Blair) at about one hour 15 minutes, Father Merrin 'The Exorcist' (Max von Sydow) doesn't arrive until one hour 37 minutes, and then the film concludes around the two-hour-ten-minute mark.

Hardly a cracking pace

So what did I see in the film, apart from the dumbfound allure of a possessed girl who spins her head 360-degrees, spits projectile bile on men of the cloth and masturbates with a crucifix? Strangely enough, I think it was the bringing of the unreal into reality that had me glued to my chair not once but twice in a row. The fact that this twelve-year-old girl—only one year more mature than my own age at the time—could be transformed by the wizardry of Dick Smith's makeup and some contorted audio samples into one of the most unsightly beasts ever committed to the screen was the stuff of extreme fascination.

I'd also like to think the over-arching premise of good triumphing over evil, which is consequently Friedkin's view of the film, although he'd like to leave interpretation up to the individual, contributed to my subconscious attraction to the film.

Something similar had happened the same year with *ET: The Extra Terrestrial*, obviously a formative year for this creative mind. Being aged the same as Elliott—the lucky boy who makes friends with the alien life form dubbed ET—propelled 'yours truly' into the realm of 'that could be me.' Considering I saw the film three times at the cinema, cried every time as soon as the spaceship left ET on Earth (i.e., five minutes or so into the movie) and purchased enough merchandise to single-handedly float the Spielberg conglomeration, you could say that *ET* scarred me for life too.



If I could have bought a Linda Blair doll, though, I would have.

What *The Exorcist* succeeded in doing was create a bar from which all cinema must rise. Disappointingly, it seemed at times as though the high mark had been set in 1973 and very few would surpass it. It's hard to fathom such a confrontational film steeped in darkness and religious blasphemy could ever be nominated for an Academy Award, let alone win (Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Sound). Without stepping into a treatise on exemplary cinema, let's just say *The Exorcist* draws few peers, except for the likes of *Alien*, *Jaws* and John Carpenter's *The Thing*, among the collective elite.

As I say in my book, "watching *The Exorcist* is somehow dirty business—it really does get under your skin". Despite—and maybe because of—the controversy (it was based on the true life exorcism of a young boy in the 1940s, and there were a number of 'strange happenings' with the cast and crew linked to the film), it has become the highest grossing R-rated film in history.

Some people may point an accusatory finger at my 'neglectful' parents and rant, "Do you know what she did, your cuntin' daughter?" Yes, well, my mother and father eventually discovered what I did, but they ain't complaining now. After all, how many people keep their guilty indulgences in the closet and live with the shame until their dying day? Instead, I use mine to pay the rent. I love horror—nay, I love cinema that is powerful and evocative—and, I say it loud, I love horror and I am proud.

Emma Westwood
is the author of
the book
Monster Movies.
To find out more,
go to:



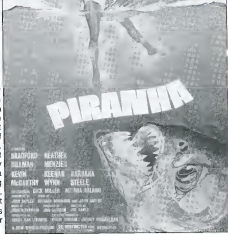
www.pocketessentials.com/film/monstermovies
www.myspace.com/monstermoviesbook

FILMS THAT SCARRED US FOR LIFE:

PIRANHA

BY JOE WAWRZYNIAK

The first film I thought to spill some ink on and share my thoughts about was *The Shining*, but I ultimately decided to nix that one because it's such a dead obvious and groaningly predictable choice. Ditto such widely acknowledged fright feature classics as *Night of the Living Dead*, *The Exorcist*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, and *Halloween*. Same reason again; those particular picks are total Cliche City all the way. So I rack my brain for a day or two until it suddenly hits me. I vividly recall seeing Joe Dante's delightful tongue-in-cheek Jaws cash-in *Piranha* for the first time on the TV station TBS at age eleven in 1963. This was one certain moment that startled the living hell out of me when I initially viewed it. It's when sweet and appealing summer camp counselor Betsy (winningly played by the always endearing Belinda Balaski) sinks to the bottom of the lake in a red swirl of her own blood as the titular carnivorous mutant fish nibble away at her. Boy, did this scene send a tremendous shock to my system as I saw it unfold onscreen. Betsy was such a nice and likable character; it just wasn't fair for her to meet an abrupt and brutal demise. Why couldn't that jerk of a head counselor Dumont (a hilariously campy Paul Bartel) get eaten instead, by those flesh-eating finny fiends? Now, there's a guy who deserves to get munchied. But no, it wasn't to be. The undeserving Dumont lives and poor Betsy buys it. And that's exactly why *Piranha* rates highly in my book as one heck of a fine horror movie. In the best of right flicks it's open season on everybody: Young and old, nice and mean, good and bad, men and women, kids and adults, nobody gets spared from possibly shuffling off their mortal coil. Sure, it just ain't right that your favorite engaging character doesn't make it to the ending credits alive and intact, but that's precisely the sort of thing that gives the best horror films that extra potent sting in their tail.



CAST:
BRADFORD BRADY
DOLAN
KEVIN KEENE
MCDONALD
WYNNE STEELE
DIRECTOR: JOE DANTE
PRODUCER: JERRY BRUCKHEIMER
SCREENPLAY: JERRY BRUCKHEIMER
BASED UPON THE NOVEL BY
JOHN WILKINSON
A B&W VIDEO PRESENTATION

THE ORIGINAL SOURCE FOR VINTAGE SLEAZE & TEASE!

SEE THE VERY BEST IN EXPLOITATION CINEMA!

DAVID F. FRIEDMAN • HARRY NOVAK
HERSCHELL GORDON LEWIS
ORIS WISHMAN • JOE SARINO
BARRY NAYON • BETTIE PAGE
THE FILMLOLITS • SEXY SHOCKERS
AND LOTS MORE!

\$10 DVD & VHS!

SPICY!

SEND \$5 FOR OUR COMPLETE CATALOG!

SOMETHING WEIRD

POB 33664 • SEATTLE WA 98133
425-290-5830
www.somethingweird.com

BLOODGORE VIDEO

Extreme horror, gore and thousands of bizarre amateur adult DVDs from America, Asia, and Europe! Largest selection of shocking, rare and long lost buried oddities not available elsewhere! Super low prices, incredible free DVD deals and friendly, professional service. Send \$1.00 (cash only, no checks) for our amazing thick catalog. MUST BE OVER 18 YEARS OLD USA ONLY.

BLOODGORE DVD
ATTN: SCRM
PO BOX 543
ISELIN, NJ 08830-0543

SPLATTER PLATTERS!

THE GRIM REAPER'S GREATEST HITS

Article by Darryl Mayeski

U.K. based Ace Records, the folks who brought us the wonderful *These Ghoulish Things* collection, has released two creepy compilation discs titled *Dead! The Grim Reaper's Greatest Hits* and the follow-up *Still Dead! The Grim Reaper's Jukebox*. I love a good tragedy tale, and these two CDs collect 48 of the most macabre tracks ever put to wax. Many of the obvious songs are here: The Shangri-las' "Leader of the Pack" and "Give Us Your Blessings"; Jan & Dean's "Dead Man's Curve"; Ray Peterson's "Tell Laura I Love Her"; Dickie Lee's "Patches"; and, "Teen Angel" by Mark Dinning. A few of these death dirge discs were covered by the likes of Pearl Jam (J. Frank Wilson's "Last Kiss") and Elvis Costello (Jack Kittel's "Psycho"). But I'd like to dig a bit deeper into the music vault and unearth some of the less familiar tunes that can be found on the *Dead Top 40* (or 48, to be exact).



"Terry" was a #4 U.K. hit for the seventeen-year-old pop sensation Twinkle. The song tells the tale of a girl who cheats on her biker boyfriend—he finds out—speeds away on his motorcycle—and the rest is should-a-could-a-would-a history. Twinkle does have remorse for her infidelity—she prays that her dead beau will greet her at heaven's gate. Fat chance!

Jody Reynolds' "Endless Sleep" (1958) is on par with Twinkle's "Terry," but the sexes are turned this time. A boy has an argument with his girl—she decides to end it all by jumping into the ocean. He notices her footprints in the sand, jumps into the water, and finds his girl is in the breakers—miraculously still alive. "Endless Sleep" was compromised by Reynolds' record label, who insisted that Jody change the lyrics to have a happy ending. Jody passed away in November 2008.

The Goodies' "Condition Red" was a lame attempt to bring the Shangri-las' "Leader of the Pack" into late 60's hippie territory. Mom and dad put their foot down and tell their teenage daughter that she can no longer date her Jesus look-a-like boyfriend. When she breaks the news to him ("we can still meet on the corner") he freaks out, gets in his car, and . . . honestly, do I need to go on? The Goodies were a trio who performed on the Stax subsidiary label Hip. "Condition Red" barely cracked the top 50—with good reason.

Of all the songs on Ace's *Grim Reaper* collection, none is more gag inducing than the 1972 hit "Once You Understand" by Think. Although it sounds dreadfully dated today, at the time the song hit home with a lot of teens (you know, the age group that used to buy records more than anyone), and the single soared to #23 on the Billboard record chart. It's an angry, ugly record, a one-listen-is-plenty kind of number that evokes feelings that humans shouldn't bare children.

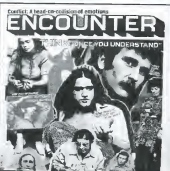
"Once You Understand" is more of a spoken word piece than an actual tune, with a mantra of "things get a little easier, once you understand" played throughout the background of the entire song. It's eerie and dizzying at the same time. The tune pits parents against their children: Mom and dad can't relate to their kids. They're lazy slobs who are more interested in joining a band than getting a nine to five job. Dad tells his son, "Get a haircut! Don't argue with your mother—just shuddap and listen! When I was your age, I worked twelve-hour days, six days a week! The generation gap isn't a males only club, mother and daughter have their share of quarrels as well. Ma

quips to her son, "Don't you have homework? You better be home at 10 p.m., or don't come home at all! I don't want you in that neighborhood, I don't like the kind of people living there!" The poor kids are so verbally abused, that they can't deal with authority or reality, so they turn to drugs instead. As the record comes to a close, we hear a policeman tell the father that his son has died of an overdose. "OH MY GOD!" he sobs. (Cue music.) . . . "Things get a little easier, once you understand . . ." What IS to understand? If parents are strict, that gives teens carte blanche to kill themselves??? Lou Stallman and Bobby Susser wrote many memorable songs. Stallman penned hits for Perry Como, Denise Williams, Dion, and The Supremes. Susser has a successful career writing children's music. But neither man has ever reproduced anything as bad as the abomination that is "Once You Understand."

Carolyn Sullivan's bizarre single "Dead" was originally recorded on Major Bill Smith's Soft label, then re-issued on Philips minus the harsh lyrics. Sung to the backdrop of a toe-tapping, funky organ beat (think Booker T meets James Brown), Ms. Sullivan's opening lyrics are "Leave me alone." The gal means business. She proceeds to sing, "I don't care anymore; I ain't got nothing to live for, since he's been gone; I just wanna be dead." She ends the song (literally) singing, "With this razor in my hand, I'll remove my watchband; if no one interrupts while I make this cut, I'll be dead." Needless to say, the song wasn't the feel good hit of 1966.

I'm puzzled why the powers that be at Kapp Records thought Betty Barnes' 1968 single "Requiem (For a Girl Born of the Wrong Times)" had even the slightest chance to appear on the top 40. Then again, Kapp was the same label who gave us the Spike Jones single "I Want the South to Win the War for Christmas."

Betty tells her tale of woe from inside the hearse as she sees friends and family mourning over their loss. Like "Once You Understand," this is also a spoken word record about an out of place teen who is no longer among the living. However, what makes "Requiem" even creepier is that the dearly departed is doing the narration. As the *Grim Reaper* liner notes read, "Misunderstood girl attends own funeral."



Ten tragedy songs were big money makers in the late 50's and early 60's. "Tell Laura I Love Her," "Teen Angel," "Ebony Eyes," "Leader of the Pack," "Patches," and "Dead Man's Curve" were top 10 smashes. It was only natural that novelty records would try to cash in on the new death disc phenomenon. The most popular of the lot belonged to Jimmy Cross. "I Want My Baby Back" parodies bits of "Last Kiss" and "Leader of the Pack," but adds a necrophilia twist! Though the song only reached #92 on the Billboard charts in 1965, Dr. Demento revived the tune on his syndicated radio program in the early 70's. In 1977, "I Want My Baby Back" resurfaced in the U.K. when DJ Kenny Everett named it the world's worst record.



Walter Jackson was a soul singer with a powerful, passionate voice. He started in the music business in 1959, and found minor success in the mid-sixties working with Curtis Mayfield. Jackson was stricken with polio at a young age, and can be seen on several album covers using crutches. His 1968 single "The Bad" (Epic) was written by Eddie Rabbit ("I Love a Rainy Night"). Jackson's rendition is nothing short of goose bump scary. His wife is gone—whether she has died, we'll never know; it is never made clear on the record. If I were to guess, it sounds like she didn't just up and leave. Her perfume smell is still on the bed, her lipstick is on the pillow, but



the sheets where she used to lay are very, very cold. By the time we hear the final verse of "The Bad," the grieving husband just can't stand to live anymore without her. He takes a few sleeping pills to buffer his emotional state... Oh hell, he downs the entire bottle! "Now I lay me down to sleep..." (song fades).



"Tragedy" (1958), like "The Bad," centers around a man pining away at the loss of his lover. The song was recorded by Thomas Wayne and the Delons. Wayne's vocals resemble Elvis Presley's, which isn't surprising, seeing that the King's guitarist, Scotty Moore, owned the Fernwood label on which this track appears. "Wind and storm,

gone's the sun, from the stars, my dark has come, you've gone from me, oh, oh tragedy..." So, how did Wayne's sweetheart die? The only clue is in this lyric: "Like smoke from a fire, our dreams are gone." Chances are, she was burned to a crisp. The song rose to #5 on the Billboard chart in 1959. Wayne's follow-up, "Eternally," didn't fare as well.

Verne Stovall's "Long Black Limousine" could be called a careful-what-you-wish-for record, as this tragic tune is a true story. Co-writer and Stovall friend Bobby George was German in Deutschland in 1954 when he overheard a German housewife telling her husband that her greatest wish was to have money and own a black limousine. Sure

enough, soon after, she died in a road accident. Her final ride was in a long black limo. The song was a hit for Stovall in 1961, and has since been covered by Elvis Presley, Gram Parsons, The Grateful Dead, Glen Campbell, and Merle Haggard.

Tony Casanova (now there's a name!) was a one-hit wonder whose song "Yee! Yee! Come Another Day" (1958) scored a mild hit on the Crest label (the same folks who issued "Long Black Limousine"). The flip side was "The Grave," a dreadful tune that would've made a perfect Cramps cover. "Now she's dead, my future wife, I'm gonna be lonely for the rest of my life." Tony comes up with the brilliant idea that if he prays every day to the good lord above, God may have mercy and resurrect the future Mrs. Casanova! This song deserves its own place in the ground.

Terry Tyler's "A Thousand Feet Below" may have the distinction of being the most uplifting song about suicide I've ever heard. When he witnesses his baby climb up a mountain and jump from the rocks to her death, ol' Terry hears his darling's voice coming from below, commanding him to take a leap as well! By the time the tune has ended, I felt like taking the plunge myself.

The Bee Gees posed the question, "How can you mend a broken heart?" Hopefully they never got around to asking singer Bob Frytogle for his suggestion. Bob recorded "Six Feet Under" (1964), a dire dirge about a man whose heart has been badly broken, and the only way he can find peace from his sorrow is to bury himself alive! Bob found a way to kill two birds with one stone, so to speak. After recording "Six Feet Under," his heart and showbiz career were never to be seen again.

Dead: The Grim Reaper's Greatest Hits and Still Dead: The Grim Reaper's Jukebox are both worth seeking out. Many of the tracks on these two superb compilations appear on CD for the first time. Here's to hoping Ace Records will continue the series with a third volume of splatter platters. A few candidates for Grim Reaper 3 could be "Susie and Jeffrey" by Blondie, "Timothy" by The Buoyos, Terry Jacks' "Seasons in the Sun," "D.O.A." by Bloodrock, "A Young Girl" by Noel Harrison; the list is as endless as death itself!



Artists like The Louvin Brothers and Howard Vokes recorded many death records. Worth searching out is Vokes' *Songs of Tragedy and Disaster*, which contains such standards as "Put My Shoes Away," "Tomorrow is my Last Day," "The Death of Little Kathy Fiscus," "Engineer's Last Ride," and "Willie Roy the Crippled Boy." The Louvins are Grand Old Opry legends. Known for their gospel albums (such as *Satan is Real!*), brothers Charlie and Ira created some of the greatest country songs ever recorded. Check out "Knoxville Girl" and "In the Pines" from 1956's *Tragic Songs of Life*. Both tunes are about gruesome murders—sung in the first person!



Another death-related collection for your listening pleasure is the essential *People Take Warning! Murder Ballad and Disaster Songs, 1913-1938*. This three-disc box set traces the earliest recorded roots of death on wax, and features songs such as "The Fatal Wreck of the Bus," "Last Scene of the Titanic," "Ohio Prison Fire," "Burning of the Cleveland School," "The Murder of the Lawson Family," and "Poor Ellen Smith!"



Death discs may not be everyone's cup of tea, but for those Screen readers with morbid minds, it should be right up your alley.



ROD SERLING'S NIGHT GALLERY

BY SHANE M. DALLMANN

Welcome to the NIGHT GALLERY. Now if you'll just follow me.

Submitted for your approval: the definitive book on the series which followed *The Twilight Zone*—the only series to bear the name of creator Rod Serling in the title. Our volume is entitled *Rod Serling's Night Gallery: An After-Hours Tour*. It was assembled by historians Jim Benson and Scott Skelton, and it contains the memories and observations of virtually every creative force associated with the aforementioned anthology series. If it's a production history or a comprehensive episode guide you seek, look no further—your humble curator could scarcely presume to condense—let alone top—this exhaustive volume in the form of an overview catering to the readers of the "program" you now hold in your hands. Nevertheless, *Rod Serling's Night Gallery* (despite the labeling of Universal's DVD sets, Serling's name was part of the show's official title) has now received a new piece of history—something it didn't have when the Benson/Skelton book was originally published. That something would be the official DVD release of the first two seasons of this three-season experiment. So perhaps I might yet show you around?

Following the five-season run of the acclaimed *Twilight Zone*, series creator Rod Serling (an acclaimed veteran of television and film writing, as well as the on-screen host of the show) sought another televised outlet for his creative impulses. In 1959, a concept originally pitched as *Rod Serling's Wax Museum* became a three-part anthology film for television airing under the title *Night Gallery* (Serling scripted and hosted, but his name did not appear in the official title at that time). The ratings were through the roof, and the proposed series was quickly greenlit under the auspices of producer Jack Laird (Ben Casey, *Kojak*). And thereby hangs a tale . . . stories of Serling's unhappiness with lack of total creative control matched with those of Laird's personal eccentricities and domination of the set overshadowed virtually everything else associated with the show. This, coupled with the fact that the version of the show seen by most viewers over the years in the form of syndicated reruns barely resembled what had originally aired, made a complete and total reassessment of the series a necessity. Step one was the Benson/Skelton book—and step two is the DVD release. (Most of the "original" episodes were sold to subscribers of Columbia House on VHS, and the uncensored versions also aired on the Encore Mystery Channel, but neither outlet could truly be said to have reached the public at large).

Universal's release of "the complete first season" was regarded as a disappointment to longtime fans of the series. An online petition to have the episodes digitally remastered was disregarded, and the extras were non-existent (save for sample episodes from the second and third seasons). Nevertheless, both the pilot film and all six hour-long episodes from the limited first season (it was one of four series which took turns sharing a weekly time slot, in fact) are accounted for here, and the collection offers enough historic importance and out-and-out quality to make it a must-have all the same.

Casual fans and historians alike will debate the merits of the subsequent series for as long as television is discussed, but all appear to be in (quite justifiable) agreement regarding the "standout" status of the *Night Gallery* pilot, "The Cemetery," directed by Boris Sagal, is a creepy-as-all-get-out slice of E.C. flavored justice. Roddy McDowall's casual murder of his wealthy uncle is repaid when the apparition of his victim rises from the grave and makes a slow, steady approach to his killer's front door . . . but only (?) in the form of an ever-changing painting. "Eyes," which, of course, provided a young Steven Spielberg with his first set of directorial reins, gives us the great Joan Crawford as a wealthy blind woman for whom a down-and-out Tom Bosley is willing to permanently give up his eyesight just so she can see for the space of one hour. And "Escape Route" (directed by Barry Shear) serves another dose of canvas karma to fugitive Nazi war criminal Richard Kiley, who discovers that he can project himself into a painting promising an eternity of blissful peace on the banks of a beautiful lake.



The dead come knocking in the *Night Gallery* pilot Episode, "The Cemetery."



The Doll

The pilot film is then followed by the series proper: each installment filling out a 60-minute timeslot with two or three stories of varying length (ranging from full-length dramas to five-minute quickies). Season One contains plenty of highlights, starting with "The Dead Man," in which Michael Biegan (of *Beyond the*

Valley of the Dolls) has the ability to "perform" any medical condition under hypnosis—his doctor takes advantage of this talent when his own wife's straying eye fails to go undetected, with morbid consequences. Medicine also plays a role in "The Little Black Bag," based on a classic C.M. Kornbluth short story: Burgess Meredith is a disgraced doctor whose fortunes may change in the extreme when he gets his hands on a miraculous medical bag accidentally transported from the future. The enigmatic ghost story "The House" gave John Astin one of his earliest and most pleasurable experiences as a director. "The Doll" remains one of the most frightening episodes of the entire series: Director Guillermo Del Toro (*Pan's Labyrinth*) relates the literal pants-wetting effect it had on him as a child (but in a story that had to wait for the release of Season Two). And "They're Tearing Down Tim Riley's Bar" stands as one of the most acclaimed teleplays penned by Serling in his entire career, focusing on embittered salesman William Windom as he watches his professional life disintegrate, only to see a doorway to a happy past in a tavern everybody else knows has been shut down . . .

The pilot film notwithstanding, the anthology format is prone to "hit and miss" success, and *Night Gallery* was no exception even in the early going. "Make Me Laugh," despite reuniting Steven Spielberg with Tom Bosley and adding Godfrey Cambridge to the mix, suffered from miscasting and disorganization, while the threat of network censorship severely compromised "Clean Kills and Other Tropes," which originally promised to serve as one of Serling's most unapologetically grisly and disturbing offerings. Over-direction keeps "Pamela's Voice" from working as intended (though you do get John Astin and Phyllis Diller). And yes, there were those giant mice on the moon (sorry, did I give "The Nature of the Enemy" away?) in the first "blackout" sketch of the series, which apparently was not meant to be funny!

Again, please don't look here for the definitive episode guide—the complete listings are easily obtainable elsewhere. The Season One DVD offers no frills—not even subtitles—but at the very least it delivers what it promises, which is plenty. And it throws in three bonus

episodes. "The Diary/A Matter of Semantics/Big Surprise/Professor Peabody's Last Lecture" can now be found in its proper position in the Season Two collection and is thus disposable here, but there are also two Season Three (half-hour format) offerings: "The Return of the Sorcerer" is a nice, grisly payoff between Vincent Price and Bill Bixby, while "Whisper" is a well-intended, mature (and downbeat) ghost story that just doesn't quite come off even with Sally Field cast as the unhappy medium . . .

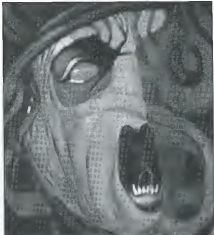
While still not digitally remastered, the Season Two set provides far more of what fans wanted to see (and hear) starting with Season One. All twenty-two episodes have been equipped with optional English subtitles; seven receive audio commentary (more on that later); and, there's also a nice assortment of bonus features.



Carl Reiner learns the hard way why it's not a good idea to summon up the dead in "Professor Peabody's Last Lecture."

Season Two gave us *Rod Serling's Night Gallery* at its very best and its very worst (though it was never as bad as it appeared to be in syndication). While Serling and Laird continued to clash behind the scenes, both men were still capable of delivering exceptional work (Laird served as director of two of the best-loved episodes, "A Question of Fear" and the H.P. Lovecraft-inspired "Pickman's Model") when left to their own devices, and the series had more than its share of high spots. On the other hand, Serling was also quite capable of turning in uninspired rehashes of his past triumphs ("The Different Ones"), while Laird helped turn critical opinion on its ear with his penchant for silly, comedic blackouts. Said blackouts (with few exceptions) remain highly scorned by Benson and Skelton, but your humble temporary tour guide must confess that he was never personally bothered by them—as a child he found both them amusing and relieving; and, even through mature eyes they offer a cornucopia of guest stars you won't find elsewhere in the series (Adam West, Wally Cox, Cesar Romero, Marty Allen and the voice of Mel Blanc come immediately to mind) with all the trivia that entails. While Steven Spielberg never returned to the series, such feature film veterans-to-be as Jeannot Szwarc (*Bug*, *Jaws 2*, *Somewhere in Time*) and John Badham (*Saturday Night Fever*, *Blue Thunder*, *War Games*) frequently took the reins with memorable results.

Benson and Skelton provide "podcast" audio commentary for three of their favorite episodes, starting with the season's fourth installment ("A Fear of Spiders/Junior Marmalade Wine/The Academy") which kicks off with another genuinely creepy shocker (starring Patrick O'Neal) and winds down with an equally unsettling tale in which cast-against-type Pat Boone finds just the right school for his troublesome son. Benson and Skelton also apply their vast store of knowledge to "Cool Air/Camera Obscura/Quoth the Raven"—they hate the blackout at the end, of course, but the H.P. Lovecraft adaptation that opens the hour is another series favorite, and the follow-up, pitting heartless moneylender Rene Auberjonois against Ross Martin (creator of the fateful title contraption) is yet another. Finally, "Undermann's Catch/The Late Mr. Peddington/A Feast of Blood" kicks off with a most unusual (and disturbing) "mermaid" tale starring Stuart Whitman and bows out with a nasty bit of business involving an animal-shaped brooch that Sondra Locke finds impossible to remove.



A sample of the paintings from Season One of *Rod Serling's Night Gallery*. (top) Pamela's Voice (center) Eyes (bottom) The House



FRIGHT NIGHT

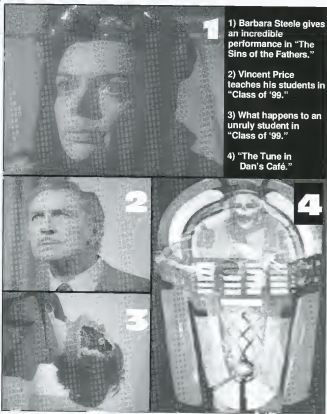
As mentioned previously, director Guillermo Del Toro also weighs in on three episodes. The profound effect *Night Gallery* and series like it had on his childhood and his future as a filmmaker make him a perfect choice for the task—and his constant theme of “monsters” and related horrors as seen through the eyes of a child is reflected in his choices and his comments. “The Phantom Farmhouse” remains a well-made and unusual werewolf tale starring David McCallum and David Carradine, but it’s the episode’s follow-up that demanded del Toro’s attention: “Silent Snow, Secret Snow,” based on the Conrad Aiken short story and narrated by the inimitable Orson Welles, is Del Toro’s pick for *Night Gallery*’s ultimate buried treasure.

This haunting look at a young boy’s absorption into his own private world forms what Del Toro considers a trilogy also consisting of “Brenda” (for which he does not provide commentary) and “The Messiah on Mott Street” (for which he does). This latter episode, starring Edward G. Robinson as a frail, aging Jewish man and Yaphet Kotto as the imposing figure who may or may not be the title Messiah himself, is another candidate for Serling’s greatest and most heartfelt work. (Del Toro has little patience for the co-feature, “The Painted Mirror”—Zsa Zsa Gabor is effectively annoying, and the supernatural adventure does have a nice fadeout, but it all seems too silly coming after “Messiah.”) Finally, Del Toro is handed what may be the series all-time favorite, “The Caterpillar.” Yes. The one with Laurence Harvey and the “earwig.” The bug that goes in his ear when he meant it for someone else. The punch-line heard round the world. Simple as that. This episode was paired with “Little Girl Lost,” which isn’t nearly as frightening, but which is excellent in its own way and is another fine showcase for William (“Tim Riley’s Bar”) Windom, whose refusal to acknowledge the reality of his daughter’s demise leads to devastating consequences for the world (not to mention more relevant material for Del Toro).

Also outstanding: “Class of ‘99” (Vincent Price dishing out an increasingly troubling oral exam to his graduating class); “A Question of Fear” (duel of nerves between Leslie Nielsen and Fritz Weaver); “Green Fingers” (Cameron Mitchell is dealt one of the most frightening fadeouts seen in the series courtesy of Elsa Lanchester); “Last Rites for a Dead Druid” (the episode with Bill Bixby and that creepy statue); “Deliveries in the Rear” (Cornel Wilde in a nasty Burke & Hare variant); “I’ll Never Leave You—Ever” (John Saxon in a harsh “be careful what you wish for” tale of black magic); and, “The Sins of the Fathers,” featuring Richard Thomas descending into pure hysteria in a tale of old-school “sin eating” (with Barbara Steele and Michael Dunn) that convinced its makers that they had finally gone too far for television.

Points for originality go to the casting of Arte Johnson as a ruthless disc jockey unknowingly condemned to the devil’s crucible in “The Flip Side of Satan,” while “The Tune in Dan’s Café” managed to spark a country-western hit when first aired. And while the majority of the “blackouts” were (surprise) silly, it would be unfair to include “Hell’s Bells,” a genuinely funny outing (from Theodore J. Flicker) in which hippie John Astin doesn’t find Hades to be quite what he expected. “Can you do something about the music?”

Missing from the DVD is a much-reviled (and admittedly pointless) blackout sketch known as “Witches Feast” (starring Ruth Buzzi)—it was replaced for the rerun of its episode by “Satisfaction Guaranteed” (one of the better sketches, starring Victor Buono). The DVD case claims that “Satisfaction Guaranteed” is unavailable in its complete form—yet it seems to be the exact same sketch that I’ve seen countless times and I, for one, can’t imagine what, if anything, is missing. In the meantime, “Witches Feast” can still be seen in the traditional syndicated version as seen on the Sci-Fi Channel.



1) Barbara Steele gives an incredible performance in “The Sins of the Fathers.”

2) Vincent Price teaches his students in “Class of ‘99.”

3) What happens to an unruly student in “Class of ‘99.”

4) “The Tune in Dan’s Café.”

Ah, yes. That syndicated version. Remember—Seasons One and Two consisted of hour-long episodes broken down into stories of significantly varying lengths. Now imagine trying to shoehorn this package into a half-hour format. Stories which ran over half an hour in their original form (including such masterpieces as “They’re Tearing Down Tim Riley’s Bar” and “A Question of Fear” were brutally hacked down to fit; certain stories running significantly less than half an hour were padded out with extra footage (in the most notorious example, “The Different Ones,” already one of the low points of the series, was bafflingly and agonizingly stretched out with stock footage from *Silent Running* and *Fahrenheit 451* . . . watch out for the flying police, okay?). And for the coup de grace? Since the available episodes still didn’t add up to a complete syndication package, Universal took advantage of the failure of the 24 episode Gary Collins parapsychology flop *The Sixth Sense* (no relation to any movie by that name, obviously) and decided to add that to the mix. Yes, indeed—each hour-long episode of that completely unrelated series was whittled down to half-hour format, while Rod Serling himself was paid to provide introductions to twenty-four new paintings in “his” gallery (I would not want to have been hanging around him on that day) for an incomprehensible spew of what would now be officially known as *Rod Serling’s Night Gallery*.

The third and final season of the “real” series has yet to arrive on DVD, but the bulk of the damage has already been undone—as Season Three was formatted for a half-hour timeslot it began with, no untoward monkey business was performed for those particular episodes in syndication. The Season Two set supplements the Benson/Skelton/Del Toro commentaries with an enjoyable reunion featurette known as “Revisiting the Gallery.” Herein, such series veterans as Jeanne Szware, John Badham, Lindsay Wagner, Joseph Campanella, Pat Boone, gallery painter Tom Wright and series composer Gil Melle (who also did the honors for the Kolchak: *The Night Stalker* teleseries) join Benson and Skelton for a trip down memory lane—particularly amusing is the breakdown of the Leslie Nielsen blackout “Phantom of WHAT Opera?” “The Paintings of *Night Gallery*” offers a selection of Tom Wright’s gallery artwork coupled with the audio observations of the artist himself; and, a selection of NBC promotional material rounds out the bonus section.

Make no mistake—whatever errors and omissions Universal may have made on the road to bringing this series to DVD, amends have been made and there’s still one entire season left for discovery. Your temporary tour guide makes no bones about it—*Rod Serling’s Night Gallery* meant more to him than even *The Twilight Zone* did (at the crucial time)—and these releases deserve your support.

The exit can be found to your right. And please patronize our gift shop. We’re sure you’ll find exactly what you’re looking for.



(top left)
Spectre in Tap-Shoes
(top right)
Phantom of What Opera?
(center)
The Dear Departed
(bottom left)
A scene from
“The Different Ones.”

BILL CHANCELLOR

Illustration and Graphic Design



Email: billchancellor@earthlink.net (915) 208-5006
www.artbybillchancellor.com

AFTER HOURS CINEMA'S COLLECTOR EDITION GRINDHOUSE SEXPLOITATION ON DVD!



AVON COLLECTION #1 STORY OF PRUNELLA

One of the most shocking and visceral New York grind house films ever! Three ruthless criminals break out of prison and wreak havoc on New York City. Their reign of terror escalates when they kidnap and brutalize the warden's daughter at her bridal shower. Directed by notorious NYC filmmaker Phil Prince.
DVD - Reg. \$29.99 OUR PRICE \$27.99



FORCED ENTRY DVD Uncut!

Recently released from duty, a deranged Vietnam vet. brings the carnage home with him and declares war on New York City's female population.
1974 / DVD includes full color booklet with liner notes by Director
A. Shaun Costello
reg. \$29.99 OUR PRICE \$27.99



WET WILDERNESS / COME DEADLY

After Hours Cinema and 9th Avenue Exploitation present two rare and rarely seen exploitation shockers - Wet Wilderness and Come Deadly - both restored and presented for the first time on DVD, includes Booklet w/ Liner Notes.
Double Feature DVD - Reg. \$39.95
OUR PRICE \$27.95



ZODIAC RAPIST 2-DVD DOUBLE FEATURE

Hard-boiled detective figures were a noteworthy staple in early 1970s grindhouse, manifesting themselves in some of the earliest exploitation productions coming out of Los Angeles. Stars John Holmes. First time ever on home video.
reg. \$29.99 OUR PRICE \$27.99

AlternativeCinema.com

Order Via MASTERCARD/VISA - Web: www.AlternativeCinema.com

Order Via Phone: 973-263-2226

Order Via Fax: 973-492-8958

Order Via Email: ACWarehouse@aol.com

Order via Mail (check, money order - US Funds Only):

Alternative Cinema - P.O. Box 132 - Butler, New Jersey 07405 USA

other available DVD titles: ULTIMATE AND SEX NIGHTMADE \$16.99
BESIDE DUND LOUINGE YOSPLE FEATYLE \$29.99 / SEX ON THE SUNSET STRIP \$29.99
Doris Wishman's HIDEOUT IN THE SUN \$29.99
WEDDINGS AND THE DODGERS 3 DVD \$39.99
SUNDAYHOUSE HOSTAGE 2 DVD COLLECTION \$29.99 / LIES CHIC 2 DVD EDITION \$29.99
LAURA'S TORS \$19.99 / 42nd Street Pure's Steam MAQUESS \$19.99
SWEDISH WILDCATS \$19.99 / SOXARSA \$19.99 / ARIAL LESLIE IS RACS \$19.99
SHUNGHAN SECRETS \$19.99 / Uncut Dillard in HUXOM BOMBSHELLS \$19.99
A TOUCH OF SERIE 2 DVD \$29.99

©2004 Alternative Cinema

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____

EMAIL: _____

☐ I certify that I am 18 Years or Older

☐ SEND ME A CATALOG! \$5.00 (no add postage needed for catalog)

Send Me the Following DVDs

*NJ Residents add 7% Sales Tax to all orders

Credit Card Orders Call (973) 263-2228 or Fax (973) 492-8958

Mail / Fax orders include CCH (VISA/MC Only), Billing Address, 3-Digit Code on back of card

YOU MUST BE 18 YEARS OLD
TO ORDER DVDS FROM THIS PAGE.
SHIPPING COST:

Postage: US \$6.00 first item,

Canada: \$10.00 first item,

Overseas: \$15.00 - add \$1.00 ea. addl

US Funds Only.

N.J. Residents please add 7% Sales Tax

the ghou'l'den age of rock'n'roll on **ace**



DEAD! THE GRIM REAPER'S GREATEST HITS

COCHD 1103
Diggin' into the under-to-entertain 34 fun-filled pastiches ("Ghouly melodies" in the words of Don Swamp to the departed). The funny side of death from the Grim Reaper's juke box.



STILL DEAD! THE GRIM REAPER'S JUKEBOX

COCHD 1208
Another 34 previously unheard gems from beneath the ground.



THESE GHOUL-ISH THINGS - HORROR HITS FOR HALLOWEEN AND ALL YEAR ROUND!

COCHD 1070
Ghouls listening from the vaults - 25 howlable hitpieces from the Ghou'l'den age of rock'n'roll. Be afraid - be VERY afraid.



SCREAMING LORD SUTCH ROCK & HORROR

COCH-M 66
He was Screaming Lordship turned out an album full of his distinct ghoulish grooves.



THE CRITICS LOVE AMERICAN SCARY!!

"...92 minutes of pure fun. Highly recommended."

Library Journal

"This fun documentary should be placed proudly on the classic horror shelf." *Video Business*

"WONDERFUL" *MacGuffin Magazine*

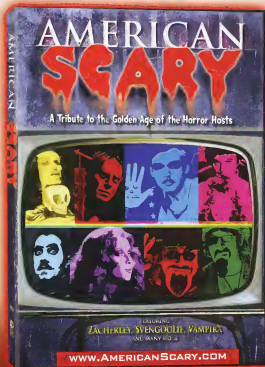
"MADE-WITH-LOVE" *MacGuffin Magazine*

"...an epic fanboy, geek-out." *The Oregonian*

"UTTERLY FASCINATING" *Paper Magazine*

"A perfect documentary for horror fans everywhere." *Entertainment Weekly*

"A loving tribute." *Pop Syndicate*



DVD EXTRAS

- >> AUDIO COMMENTARY
- >> ORIGINAL PITCH REEL
- >> BONUS INTERVIEWS



NOW ON DVD!

Available at your favorite on-line retailer

ALSO FROM
CINEMA LIBRE STUDIO →



CINEMA
LIBRE
STUDIO

WWW.CINEMALIBRESTORE.COM

SCREEN

BACK ISSUES FOR SALE!



**DUAL
COVER
ISSUES
17, 13,
& 11**



#16- New William Castle documentary: *Spine Tingler*; Tura Satana interviewed; Ray Dennis Steckler's latest project; *The Dracula Saga*; acclaimed director Kin-Ki-Duk interview; Carlos Aured remembered; DVD reviews.

\$8.00



SCREEN #17

Our Creature Feature issue contains a preview of the new documentary on *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, interviews with Ricou Browning, a tribute to Ben Chapman, Benicio Del Toro talks about his upcoming role in Universal's new *Wolfman* movie, Mexican Fantasy Films, Brother Theodore documentary, *The Forbidden Zone*, Ted V. Mikels, *The Pharaoh's Curse*, Blu-Ray and DVD reviews.

ORDER COVER A

Creature grabs Screen logo

OR COVER B

(Creature Walks Among Us)

\$8.00 each

SCREEN #13

Issue #13 looks back at *Triology of Terror*, interviews with Don Jones (*The Forest*), Rolfe Kanefsky, Damon Packard, James Bryan (*Don't Go In the Woods*), articles on Troma's *Poultrygeist*, *Devil Times Five*, *Killer Kid* Movies: *The Teen Years*, the work of Paul Frees, Mexican punk films, *The Pete Walker Collection*, *Alpha Video Classics*, *The Vampire's Coffin*, plenty of DVD reviews, too!

ORDER COVER A (Zuni Warrior)

OR COVER B (large Karen Black)

\$8.00 each

#11- Interview with director Larry Cohen, *Cannibal Holocaust*, *The Films of Val Lewton*, Klaus Nomi, *The Flesh Eaters*, DVD reviews.

\$8.00

ALSO AVAILABLE

Limited, numbered edition of 500 (alternate Peter Cushing cover)
ALMOST GONE!!

\$15.00



#15- Mink Stole Interview, Crown International Films, *New Jaws* documentary: *The Shark is Still Working*, Johnny Legend returns!, *The World of the Vampires*, Jack Hill talks about *Spider Baby*, Roky Erickson, 84 page issue!

\$8.00



#14 - Interviews with Alejandro Jodorowsky, Underdog Lady Suzanne Muldowney, Butch Patrick, *The Groovie Goolies*, Wildman Fischer, Bava's *Kill Baby Kill*, Love Me Deadly, *Valley of the Dolls*, Tobe Hooper's *Eaten Alive*, *Vampira the Movie*, Don Glut, lots more!

FEW LEFT! \$30.00



#12- Interview with Mystery Science Theater 3000 creator Mike Nelson, *Equinox* revisited, Alan (*Children Shouldn't Play With Dead Things*) Omsby, James Karen interview, *Killer Kid* Movies, DVD reviews, more!

\$8.00



#10- H.R. Giger in NYC, *Bollywood Horror*, *Mad Monkey Movies*, *DVD Goes To Hell*, *Jacob's Ladder*, *The Golem*, *Edison's Frankenstein*, *Vampire Circus*, lots more!

\$8.00





#9- Exorcist cover. Plague of The Zombies, Don't Look In The Basement, The Bride of Frank, Toxic Avenger, Eraserhead, Penn & Teller interview, Mentors.
\$8.00



#8- Last House on Dead End Street, Uncle Sam, Billy Jack attack!, Andy Milligan, Forry Ackerman's fave films, The Beast of Yucca Flats. FEW LEFT!
\$40.00



#7- Rondo Hatton cover story, Buddy Giovinozzo interview, Brother Theodore interview, Driver's Ed. films, Celluloid werewolves, more!
\$15.00



#6- An acid trip to The Angry Red Planet, Dennis Hopper interview, Dracula Has Risen From The Grave, Coffin Joe protégé Ivan Cardoso, TV monster movies.
\$6.00



**SCREAM MAGAZINE
 ISSUE #1
 IS SOLD OUT**



#5- Mario Bava's Black Sabbath, Vampira interview, Lemora revisited, Lydia Lunch, Meet the self-proclaimed Ed Wood of the 90's! Book reviews, DVD reviews
\$30.00 SCARCE!



#4- Sam Sherman on Beast of Blood, Dario Argento and Brian Yuzna interviews, a loving tribute to Bloodsucking Freaks, The Montreal Fantasia Film Festival.
\$25.00



#3- Rare issue 3 back in stock!! Limited quantities left! Jodorowsky retrospective, Johnny Legend's Outer Limits experience, Charles Manson tribute album, more!
\$35.00



#2- The Man Who Laughs, Zacherley's Z-TV, Jorg Buttgerit, Tetsuo, plenty of movie and book reviews!
\$7.00

**BUY ANY 2 BACK ISSUES AND
 RECEIVE SCREEN #2 FREE!**

SPECIAL OFFER!

For collectors only!

**Purchase a COMPLETE run of
 SCREAM MAGAZINE!**

Receive issues 2 through 17 (which includes the dual issues of Screem #11, #13 and #17) and pay only \$225.00 (shipping included). A savings of over \$50.00!

ALL ISSUES ARE SHIPPED IN A STURDY MANILLA ENVELOPE. PLEASE ALLOW 1-2 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY. Add \$2.50 postage for one issue, \$3.50 postage for 2 or more issues. Foreign orders add \$2.00 extra postage for each issue. Send a check or money order to:

Screem Magazine, 41 Mayer St., Wilkes Barre, PA 18702.

We also accept PayPal orders!

To order direct, visit www.screemag.com and go to our back issues section.

Make your PayPal payment to Screemag@aol.com

IT'S DOUBLE THE NEO-GRINDHOUSE TRASH!

Blitzkrieg

ESCAPE FROM STALAG 69

**A NEW ERA OF NAZI
'TERROR' IS HERE!**

SPECIAL EDITION LOADED WITH EXTRAS, DELETED SCENES,
DVDs COMING SOON: COMMENTARIES AND MORE USELESS CRAP!

THE SUPER-8 CLASSIC!

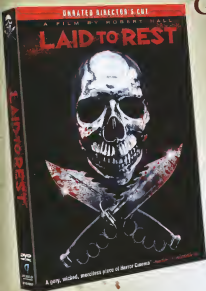
"A THROWBACK TO CRUDE,
WHITE-TRASH DRIVE-IN CLASSICS
LIKE EARLY RON ORMOND AND
H.G. LEWIS..."

—SHOCK CINEMA

BOTH COMING SOON TO DVD
ORDER ONLINE OR CHECK YOUR LOCAL RETAILER
wildeyereleasing.com



AN UNFLINCHING VISION OF GRAPHIC BLOODSHED



"A MASTERPIECE OF
MAYHEM AND CARNAGE"

~Steve "Uncle Creepy" Barton, Dread Central

"...THE MOST INVENTIVE DEATH SCENES
IN YEARS" ~Brad Miska, Bloody-Disgusting.com



Own or Rent the DVD 4/21/2009

Go to www.chromeskull/victims.com
for your chance to win \$2,500

ANCHOR BAY
PUBLISHING

www.anchorbayent.com

www.laidtorestmovie.com



© 2008 Anchor Bay, LLC. All Rights Reserved.
All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.



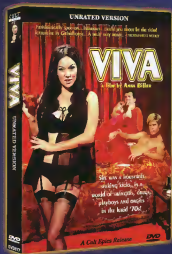
VIVA

AVAILABLE FEBRUARY 2009

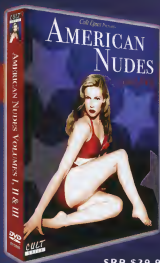


A SUBURBAN HOUSEWIFE IN 1972 GOES OUT TO
FIND HERSELF IN THE MIDDLE OF
THE PLAYBOY-ERA SEXUAL REVOLUTION.
A TRIBUTE TO VINTAGE SEXPLOITATION FILMS

A TRULY SEXY MOVIE! - ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY



SRP \$29.95



SRP \$39.95

available at

amazon.com

Another Amazon.com and the Amazon.com logo are registered trademarks of Amazon.com, Inc. or its affiliates.

CULT
EPICS

AMERICAN NUDES

A HISTORY OF AMERICAN EROTIC CINEMA

VOLUME III EXCLUSIVE IN 3 DISC DIGIPACK

VOL. I & II SINGLE DISCS \$19.95 SRP EACH

Also available

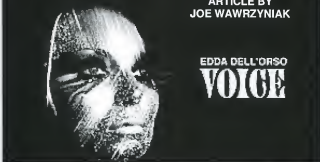
VINTAGE EROTICA COLLECTION
1920-1960

A HISTORY OF EUROPEAN EROTIC CINEMA
FEATURING 5 DISCS IN SLIMCASE BOX SET
SINGLE DISCS \$24.95 SRP EACH

view trailers at WWW.CULTEPICS.COM

EDDA DELL'ORSO: THE VOICE THAT SOARED

ARTICLE BY
JOE WAWRZYNIAK



EDDA DELL'ORSO VOICE

Edda Dell'Orso. The name may not ring a bell, but anyone who has watched a handful of spaghetti westerns and Italian giallo murder mystery thrillers certainly knows about the voice. And what an exceptionally rich, angelic, sensuous and beautiful voice it is: a gorgeous soaring soprano with a highly expressive and impressive three octave range that can convey everything from orgasmic pleasure to heart-wrenching dread to bouncy giddiness without ever uttering a single word. Dell'Orso has lent her supremely haunting and captivating, albeit often uncredited wordless vocals to countless film scores since the mid 60's for such noted Italian composers as Ennio Morricone, Piero Piccioni, Bruno Nicolai, Roberto Pregadio, and Luis Bacalov.

Edda Dell'Orso was born on February 16, 1929 in Genoa, Italy. Edda studied both piano and singing in Rome, Italy. She began her music career in 1956. She married composer/conductor Giacomo Dell'Orso in 1958. In 1960 Dell'Orso became a member of the choir I Cantori Moderni Di Alessandroni and was featured on many singles for RCA Italiana. Ennio Morricone was working as an arranger for this label and subsequently discovered Edda around this time.

Dell'Orso made her initial forays into providing vocals on movie scores in the mid-60's. Edda really hit her stride with her numerous fruitful collaborations with Morricone on the scores for the Sergio Leone spaghetti western classics *A Fistful of Dollars*, *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (the rousing "The Ecstasy of Gold" track on this particular score showcases Dell'Orso's breathtaking somersaulting voice at its most insanely divine), and *Once Upon a Time in the West*. Other notable collaborations between Dell'Orso and Morricone include the Dario Argento giallo gems *The Bird With the Crystal Plumage* and *Four Flies on Grey Velvet*, *Veruschka* (Edda's breathy animal moans on this one are truly something to hear!), *Forbidden Photos of a Lady Above Suspicion*, *Who Saw Her Die?*, *What Have You Done to Solange?* (Edda's eerie whispery vocals on the love theme for this picture are positively bone-chilling), *Short Night of the Glass Dolls*, and Leone's masterful crime epic *Once Upon a Time in America*.

Outside of her frequent collaborations with Morricone, Dell'Orso has also done memorable work with the famous Italian progressive rock group Goblin, for whom she sang vocals on the score to the grim anti-drug drama *Percy Is Killed* (the song "Edda" was specifically devised as a terrific showcase for her amazing vocal talents). An especially delightful ditty from Edda can be savored on Roberto Pregadio's score for *Smile Before Death*; Edda belts out this hilariously hearty "doot-doot-doot" chorus with tremendously joyous aplomb and seems like she's on the verge of erupting into an all-out uncontrollable giggling fit throughout. Better still is her furiously saucy and smoldering contribution to Pregadio's score for the sexy sex thriller *Amuck*; Dell'Orso really whips herself up into an intoxicating lather chanting the word "sexually" over and over again in a scorching tone while the band lays down a grinding sleazy slow-drag jazzy beat. Fortunately, both of these first-rate tracks are featured on the fantastic Crippled Dick Hot Wax CD compilation *Beet at Cinecittà*.

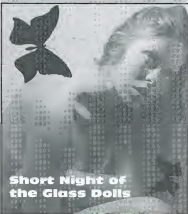
In 1999 Edda recorded the album *It's Time to Sing*, which offers the listener the rare opportunity to hear the lovely lady croon songs with actual lyrics for a change. More recently Dell'Orso has had several CD compilations of her finest film work issued: *Voice*; *Dream With a Dream* . . . *The Incredible Voice of Edda Dell'Orso*; and, *Al Cinema Con . . . Edda Dell'Orso*. Edda Dell'Orso resides in Rome, Italy and performs in live concerts on a regular basis. Long may her exquisite and ethereal voice continue to soar to the heavens and beyond.

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

1964: *A Fistful of Dollars*
1966: *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*
1967: *Matchless, The Stranger, Mission Stardust*
1968: *Once Upon a Time in the West, King of Kong Island, The Young Tigers, Love Problems*
1969: *One Night at Dinner, The Invisible Woman, The Insatiables, Dirty Angels, Scacco Alta Regina, Police Chief Pepe, Witchcraft 70*
Eugenie: *The Story of Her Journey into Perversion*
1970: *The Bird With the Crystal Plumage, The Most Beautiful Wife*
1971: *Veruschka, A Fistful of Dynamite, Amuck, Lusty Lovers, The Burglars*
The Viking Who Came from the South,
Kill Kill Kill Kill, Desert of Fire, Winged Devils, Devil in the Brain,
The Night Evelyn Came Out of the Grave,
Four Flies on Grey Velvet
1972: *Smile Before Death, The Master and Margaret, Night of the Devils, The Big Showdown, What Have You Done to Solange?, Why, All the Colors of the Dark*
1973: *A Way of Being a Woman*
1974: *The Cousin, The Secret*
1975: *The Fifth Cord*
1976: *Percy Is Killed*
1978: *Last House on the Beach, The Cat*
1984: *Once Upon a Time in America*

DISCOGRAPHY

Album: *It's Time to Sing* (1999)
CD compilation: *Al Cinema Con . . . Edda Dell'Orso* (2002)
CD compilation: *Dream With a Dream*
The Incredible Voice of Edda Dell'Orso (2005)
CD compilation: *Voice* (2007)



Short Night of the Glass Dolls

FOUR REMEMBER FIVE

COMPILED BY
TOM WEAVER

A young man (William Phipps), a pregnant woman (Susan Douglas), an elderly bank cashier (Earl Lee), a black janitor (Charles Lampkin) and an arrogant, bigoted European mountain climber (James Anderson)...on the Day After Tomorrow, these are a post-apocalyptic world's last living souls in writer-producer-director Arch Oboler's *Five* (1951). Set in a mountain lodge where the quintet has congregated (and shot in and around a Frank Lloyd Wright-designed guesthouse at Oboler's own 360-acre Malibu ranch), the offbeat, low-key sci-fi tale dramatizes how Life After the Bomb brings out the best and worst in the lucky (?) survivors.

Behind the scenes, five people made *Five*: radio great/Hollywood washout Oboler; Arthur L. Swerdloff, then a recent USC graduate with a Masters degree in cinema; and Swerdloff's fellow students Sidney Lubow, Ed Spiegel and Louis Clyde Stoumen. Right out of school, the four USC alumni had formed a company called Montage Films to produce a short called *The Earth Sings*, and next found themselves making the acquaintance of Oboler and working as photographers, editors and production assistants on his offbeat end-of-the-world drama.

To celebrate the long-awaited home video debut of *Five* (Sony Pictures, \$19.94), here is a selection of quotes from Oboler (who died in 1987), Swerdloff (who died in 2008) and stars Phipps and Douglas, taken from various interviews done over a nearly 60-year period.

Arch Oboler (Starlog interview by Samuel J. Maronie): I had the idea for *Five* years before anyone even heard of the Manhattan Project. But it took me 15 years to raise the funds to produce the picture.

Arthur L. Swerdloff (2001 interview by Tom Weaver): I met Arch Oboler in 1950, when we [Swerdloff and his USC colleagues] were editing a picture called *The Earth Sings*. We were editing at CFI and Arch, who had a cutting room next door, heard us working on it and came in. He began coming in quite frequently and he was wondering, gee, what were we doing? I told him that we had been taught by Slavko Vorkapich; Vorkapich, who was famous for his montages, also was the head of the film department at SC. Vorkapich taught the four of us, and many more people, his theories about filmmaking, which were really just the choreographing of motion picture images. We explained some of these principles to Arch, and he said, "Can you guys edit a movie I shot in Africa?" While we were working on that, Arch said, "Do you think you guys can make a feature?" There were only four of us, but we were kind of brazen; when you're young, you're very confident. Overconfident! So we told him, "Why, sure! No problem!"

William Phipps (1991 interview by Tom Weaver): When Arch Oboler was casting *Five*, he had Leo Penn—Sean's father—signed to do the lead. . . . I was doing a play at that time, Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard*, and I was playing Petya, the perpetual student, so I had a scraggly beard. Oboler came to see the play, and then he had me come up to his place in the mountains above Malibu—a ranch, the buildings all designed and built by Frank Lloyd Wright. I was all prepared to test for the part of the mountain climber, and [after I did], Arch said, "I want you to test for the lead." I said, "You've already got somebody for that part, I thought." He said, "Well, nothing's set in concrete." So I tested for the part of Michael. Arch Oboler liked my test and he paid off Leo Penn.



Susan Douglas (2001 interview by Tom Weaver): I got a call from my agent, who said that he was sending the script of *Five*. I was living [in New York City] on 53rd Street between Lexington and Third Avenue at the time. I had just read a horrible script, something that we decided NOT to do, so I was anxious. . . . [Oboler] came to New York and we went out for dinner, he said, "I'd love you to do the part" and I said, "I'd love to do it." That was that [laughs].

Arthur L. Swerdloff (2001): Arch gave me the script, called *The Last Woman*, to read; that was *Five*'s original title, *The Last Woman*. I read it, and I said, "Well, I think there's some changes we can make," and we worked on it together. I was a writer as well—I had done the first private eye series on TV, *The Cases of Eddie Drake*. We made some changes in the script, and then the four of us (plus Arch was five) went to work on the picture. It was shot at Arch's ranch in Malibu. He had a beautiful Frank Lloyd Wright guesthouse that overlooked the whole area. He also had another Frank Lloyd Wright house down below, and that was the house he lived in, he and his wife Eleanor and his secretary Garry.

Susan Douglas (2001): Going up from Zuma Beach, in the mountains, was the house where Arch lived. And on the top of the hill he had a guesthouse that was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, a wonderful house. It was a six—or eight-sided house, and all around were big windows, huge—I'd never seen that many. That's where we were shooting, that was supposed to be my house in the movie. Oboler's house down below was a normal-looking, average house; I think he'd had it for many years. It wasn't a very imposing house, the one below.

Arch Oboler (in the *Five* pressbook): My backyard is on top of a mountain ranch along California's coastline, about 60 miles from Los Angeles. The late Conrad Veidt used to tell me that the mountains around our house—with bare ridges like prehistoric bones thrust up along wind-swept ridges—reminded him of the Austrian Dolomites—which, in turn, always made him think of the end of the world.

William Phipps (2008): Today I live in Malibu, not very far from the Oboler place. But, y'know what?, I could never ever find it. I have no idea where it is. It's up there in the hills somewhere. I'm lost it's in despair now and they're trying to raise the money to fix it up. Well, rorta ruck [laughs].

Susan Douglas (2001): I stayed up in the guesthouse while we were shooting. The other four actors stayed down below at Arch's house—it had some extra bedrooms. And the crew stayed in a tent!

New York Herald Tribune (1951): When news of his picture got out, Oboler was offered plenty of star names but chose to make the film with unknowns.

William Phipps (2008 interview with Tom Weaver): That is such crap! He made this picture on a shoestring, it cost peanuts. The actors were paid minimum and the crew—students just out of school—were probably just paid their room and board. It may have cost him forty or fifty thousand dollars at the most, I don't think even that.

Susan Douglas (2001): I think, if he had been offered an Ava Gardner, he would have gotten her! Perhaps he offered it to a lot of "name" people, people who felt, "Oh, that's so improbable," and didn't want to be associated with it. I'm trying to think who Arch Oboler would remind you of. Do you remember an actor named John Garfield? Well, Arch was not as handsome as a John Garfield type, but he was dark, short, wiry.

William Phipps (1991): Oboler was a weird-looking guy. He was a gnome. He was like 5'1", 5'2", short arms, bald-headed, Coke bottle glasses kind of like Dr. Cyclops. No, not like Dr. Cyclops; Dr. Cyclops was kinda interesting-looking, and Oboler was just a creep [laughs].

Susan Douglas (2001): He was a very sensual guy.

William Phipps (1991): James Anderson [who played Eric the mountain climber] was at the Actors' Lab when I was, and he was in Laughton's acting group. Jimmy Anderson was a very nice, very talented person, but a person out of control. He'd let his emotions carry him away, he would get almost irrational at times. He was a very heavy drinker and he died very early—it was brought on by dissipation.

Susan Douglas (2001): Oboler was married—and he had a girlfriend. All living together! Arch is dead, isn't he? Because otherwise I wouldn't tell ya [laughs]. He had a wife, and he had a secretary who was more than a secretary. And the three of them lived in the house.

Arthur L. Swerdloff (2001): I don't know whether you know the relationship between Arch and Gerry and Mrs. O., but . . . we saw the three of 'em in one bed! It didn't bother us, we were too young to worry about it [laughs]. Arch had mentioned it already, he'd set it up, he'd told us what the story was, that he had a wife and a secretary and that they all had a great relationship. It was really interesting.

Susan Douglas (2001): I never saw the three in one bed but I'm sure they must have been—it was definitely a *ménage à trois*!

William Phipps (2008): Eleanor and Gerry took me out to lunch once, and the two of them were like buddy-buddies. Just the three of us had lunch together in the Valley somewhere, at some very nice restaurant, they'd made a point of inviting me: "Eleanor and I want to take you to lunch, Bill!" They got along fine, these two gals in Oboler's little "harem."

Arthur L. Swerdloff (2001): There were, of course, five people in the movie, and five people made it. I directed the camera. Arch directed the actors. Sid Lubow operated the camera (he had never operated a Mitchell before). Ed Spiegel edited the picture. And I think one of the



Years after *Five*, Oboler appeared on an episode of the local L.A. morning show *Panorama Pacific*; another guest that day was Monster Kid extraordinaire Bob Burns.

most significant contributions was made by Louis Clyde Stoumen. Lou was the director of photography, and he gave the picture a quality that I thought was just unique. I thought it was brilliant at the time, and I still do. He used a heavy red filter so the world all looked gray, like it had been radiated. And indoors, everything was shot with reflected sunlight, since there was no electric light. Those were all Lou Stoumen's concepts; he had been a still photographer before, so he really knew his stuff. We had all these big silver reflectors around to shoot the sunlight into the rooms. Finally the characters in the

movie discover an electric generator, and [from that point on] we lit the interior scenes differently, we no longer used indirect sunlight reflected into the rooms with reflectors. That gave it another quality. After making *Five*, Lou won Academy Awards for two documentaries.

Susan Douglas (2001): [As far as working with the actors.] Arch was very good. I think he liked the actors. And I think we all liked him. We all thought he was very good, and we were a little bit in awe of him, you know.

William Phipps (2008): There was a lot of silliness between Gerry K. and Oboler. I love silliness on a set, but the silliness between her and Oboler was of the inane, cutesy, childish kind; and when they indulged, they were oblivious, like three-year-olds are, to everything around them. It was like, "F**k the crew and f**k the actors, we're having our little silly sandbox potty humor here." It was painful to watch, it was disgusting to me. So the atmosphere on the set of *Five* was dysfunctional, if you follow me.

There was a very ugly incident on *Five*: College students will be college students, they're not people of long professional standing in the business. One of the crew, a very nice fellow name of Art Swerdloff, said something that Oboler didn't like and Oboler hit him. With his fist. Cut him real bad—nasty gash, blood, the whole bit. I wasn't there to see the blow struck, but I was there shortly afterwards and saw the guy—Oboler had broken his glasses and cut him all up.

Susan Douglas (2001): I don't really remember exactly what caused [the fight]. It was probably one of those "frictions." Maybe Oboler wanted a set-up in a certain spot, and they wanted a set-up in another spot 'cause they said it would work better and it was easier. Anyway, before you know it, Arch hit one of the guys . . . and the guy hit him back. There were bloody noses and stuff, and the other guys had to pull them apart. It was awful. . . . And it was scary, because we were in such a desolate place there. I was scared by the whole thing. It happened outside, on the balcony of the guesthouse.

"Oboler was married—and he had a girlfriend. All living together! Arch is dead, isn't he?"
—Susan Douglas

Arthur L. Swerdlow (2001): We were in a hurry one day and, in the confusion, Sid Lubow, who was operating the camera, hadn't loaded it. Arch said to Sid, "Since when, Mr. Lubow, do we make motion pictures without film in the camera?" And Sid, who was very thick-skinned and didn't accept any responsibility for anything [laughs] . . . Sid came right back, without batting an eye, and said, "Well, since when does Arch Oboler never make a mistake?"

I should add that, earlier on, while we were rehearsing that scene, Sid made another remark that upset Arch: "You know, Arch, this picture's gonna win the Peabody Award for radio!" That's what provoked Arch. Then, Sid shot without film in the camera!

Well, when Sid came back at him with "Since when does Arch Oboler never make a mistake?" Arch got really pissed. There were about ten steps down off the balcony, and Arch said, "I'm goin' off the set. And if I hear another word from anybody, I'm gonna punch him in the nose!" So he went down the steps . . . got himself together (he was only down there for ten seconds!) . . . he came back up, and I said, "Look, Arch, nobody's gonna hit anybody. Let's get the next shot—" And, boom, he popped me! Right in the eye. My glasses were on, and they broke.

William Phipps (1991): That was a terrible thing. No matter what the guy said or did, there's no excuse for that. But that's Oboler for you.

Arthur L. Swerdlow (2001): I was an all-American athlete, a lacrosse player and so on, and I didn't want to hit him. I knew he had been a boxer, but I still didn't want to hit him. I did hit him back, but just once, I think—I didn't want to hurt him. But he wanted to hurt me! I kept saying, "Look, I don't want to fight, Arch!" He was screaming, and Susan Douglas was goin' wild because of what was going on. Finally, Mel Shapiro, the boom man, came up with a Jeep and he took me away. And Arch kept runnin' after the Jeep, he wanted to fight some more [laughs]! He was really mad! I came back the next day and we went on to finish the picture, but I did bring a lawsuit later.

William Phipps (1991): The nearest thing I had to a run-in with Oboler was a very interesting one. We were shooting on the beach and I had a microphone under my shirt. I was doing my dialogue and Arch came up to me and said, "Bill, I want you to do that again, but use your lower register"—meaning, bring the voice down, and use my normal voice, the way I'm talking to you now. I said, "I am." He said, "No, you're not." This went on for a few hours, doing it over and over; he kept saying, "I want you to get it down." It got to be where I was saying, "But I am," and he was saying, "No, you're not." It was a standoff, an impasse. I never came unstuck, though, I kept very calmly saying, "I am speaking in my normal voice, Arch." Then, the next day, he played it all back and it was just perfect, natural and normal. He came up to me and apologized. But, coming from him, it wasn't really an apology, in fact, he didn't apologize, he admitted he was wrong. No—that's still not right, 'cause Oboler Could Do No Wrong. What happened was that he told me that what I did was the lower register. Boy, that was delicious to me [laughs]!



William Phipps and Susan Douglas wonder what their bleak future holds in the apocalyptic tale *Five* (Columbia Pictures, 1951).

Susan Douglas (2001): The only thing that really struck me as strange was, in some of the scenes near the end, I was supposed to run holding a baby. And when it came time to do those scenes . . . they gave me a baby! I asked Arch, "Why are we not using a doll? You can't even see it." He said, "No, no. I want you to feel this baby." I said, "Could I meet the mother that's stupid enough to allow an actress to run with a month-and-a-half-old baby?" I mean, I was supposed to fall with the baby! I could never understand that! But Oboler was a stickler for things like that, and I suppose that, if the mother was willing . . . [laughs], I would never let an actress take MY baby and run through the woods and stumble! . . . And in some of the later scenes, the baby was supposed to be dead! That was the part I couldn't understand. Arch kept saying, "Just hold it tightly. Don't let it move!" It was mad!

William Phipps (2009): I was on the set when she was running with the real baby in her arms. That was so stupid it really was. That's Oboler for you. God Almighty, it was idiotic.

Susan Douglas (2001): The really fun part was when we went into Glendale to shoot the city scenes. Of course, we had to shoot it at about five in the morning, so there wasn't a living person around. And if there had been, Arch Oboler would have just asked them to move [laughs]! So it was fun shooting that part . . .

William Phipps (1991): My car was one of the abandoned cars sitting on the street. It was a real shoestring production.

Arch Oboler (in the *New York Herald Tribune*, 1951): The mayor and the chief of police got all excited over the idea [of Oboler shooting in Glendale], and on two Sundays we were allowed to rope off streets and do whatever had to be done, to make the place look as it would have to look in these circumstances. There is, of course, no destruction of buildings; the catastrophe was supposed to destroy life, but did not crumble the habitations of men.



One of the many creepy scenes to be found in *Five*.

Susan Douglas (2001): It was unfortunate for Oboler that *Five* was made at least two, three years too early. When *Five* came out, people just pooch-pooched the idea. People just didn't think that this would be possible. So Oboler didn't really get the attention that I think, a few years later, he would have had.

Arthur L. Swerdlhoff (2001): *Five* was about the last five people alive after the world has been subject to nuclear fallout. The story was about fallout... and this was made in 1950. The first H-Bomb with fallout didn't occur until 1952, at Bikini Atoll—that's when the United States exploded the first H-bomb. So one of the great things about Arch was the fact that he was up on research and he was aware of the potential of fallout. That was the fundamental premise of the story of *Five*, that this could happen. It was science fiction then but, like a lot of science fiction, it was proved to be correct.

Susan Douglas (2009 *Filmfax* interview with Paul and Donna Parla): I've never seen *Five*.

Susan Douglas (2001): They had a [*Five*] premiere in New York, and I went. [Tom Weaver: *What were you called upon to do at the premiere?*] Oh, just stand up! Just an introduction and a stand-up and a wavel! It was at one of the theaters on Broadway, downtown.

Susan Douglas (2001): I just saw *Five* again and my reaction was very much like when I saw it originally. I think if Oboler had had a couple of "names," he would have done well with the movie. ... By the way, Jan [her actor-husband Jan Rubes] watched it with me the other day, and he thought it was pretty good. He said, "Oh, you were so pretty!" [Laughs] Oh, God... Fifty years. That's a long time.

Arthur L. Swerdlhoff (2001): After Columbia released *Five*, it got some good reviews. It got one *bad* review that really got Arch upset—that was from *The New York Times*.

Bosley Crowther (*New York Times* movie reviewer): [A]n idea which bears some imaginative thought is reduced to the level of banality and somewhat 'arty' pretense. ... [The *Five*] are such a wretched crew that the skeptic is well provoked to wonder whether it wouldn't be better if everyone were killed.



Arthur L. Swerdlhoff (2001): [The *Times* reviewers] were all theater people, and horror movies and stuff like that very seldom got critical acclaim. *Five* really had some substance to it, I thought, but it was talky, so they mentioned that a little bit. But other reviews were very good. On a scale of one to four stars, I'd say that it got about a three-star average.

William Phipps (1991): Oh, I never did like it. I didn't like the script, didn't like the picture, still don't. I quarrel a lot with the writing. Oboler did a lot of sermonizing, and there's a lot of sermonizing in the picture. But it always rang shallow with me.

Susan Douglas (2001): I liked the script of *Five* a lot, I really thought it was very imaginative.

William Phipps (2008): After looking at *Five* freshly the other day, I like it much more than I did in the past. I thought that Susan Douglas was very believable in the thing, very effective. I liked her in it. She plays it a little shell-shocked, but if that was a real situation, you would be a little shell-shocked, wouldn't you? Having a dead husband and a dead baby and all that s---! [Laughs] And then I would say Charles Lamplin [was next-best in the movie]; then Earl Lee; and then Anderson last. He was too stagey... he was posing too much... it was too affected. Also, he would carry a small mirror in his shirt pocket, and before every take he would take it out and look at himself and fix his hair. And, if you'll notice, he painted on a little widow's peak. A vain man, very vain—and for what? I mean, he wasn't that gifted, and he wasn't handsome!

Arch Oboler (in the *New York Herald Tribune*, 1951): I think that audiences will leave the theater, not horrified, but thoughtful, saying to themselves, "How would I act if this were to happen to me?"

Arthur L. Swerdlhoff (2001): There was a lawsuit [over the assault incident]—I had an attorney, I gave a deposition of what happened and so on. But the day before it went to court, I said, "All I want's an apology, Arch..." And when I got one, I dropped the suit.

William Phipps (2008): If I had been Sverdlhoff... you can never be in another man's shoes, but if I'd been working in the crew and Oboler did that to me, I would never drop the lawsuit, absolutely not. In moviemaking, that kind of physical violence is very, very rare, and I don't think Oboler would have done it if he'd been shooting on, say, the MGM lot, or Universal, or Warner Brothers. But he was on his ranch. That's no justification—it might have been in his mind—but we're supposed to be professionals. He was supposed to be a professional. It was almost a playground incident, like something a six-year-old would do. A six-year-old bully.

Arthur Swerdlhoff (2001): Even though this happened, I want you to know, I loved Arch Oboler. I'd listened to his radio show *Lights Out* when I was a kid, and the thought of working with him was just so great. I really loved the concept of *Five* and I loved him. I thought he was really a terrific guy. He thought I was talented, and he respected me, and he knew I loved him, really.

Arch Oboler (in the *New York Herald Tribune*, 1951): [*Five*] is a story about the day after tomorrow that I wrote about in the hope that it will never happen—
If we are strong.
If we are courageous.
If we are wise.



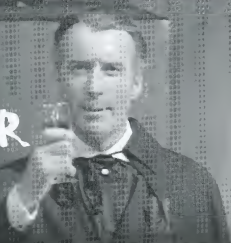
(above) Susan Douglas went on to TV soap opera stardom (*The Guiding Light*) and, in 1980, heading cable's *The Family Channel*.

(left) A publicity still of William Phipps.

SCREAM

FRIGHT FLICK PIC

OUI,
OUI
MISTER
LEE?



**WIN
A FREE
DVD!**

Christopher Lee has appeared as Dracula in many films, but this mystery pic is taken from a movie where the legendary bloodsucker is on screen for just a few seconds. What movie is this mystery picture taken from? Here's your clue—

Jerry Lewis directed this flick!

5 lucky winners will receive a FREE DVD from the good folks at Ryko films.

Send your answer on a postcard to:

SCREAM FRIGHT FLICK PIC

41 MAYER ST.

WILKES BARRE, PA 18702

TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE

A HIGHLY SUBJECTIVE GUIDE TO THE FIRST SEASON

BY GREG GOODSELL

As anthology series go, *Tales from the Darkside* ran the gamut from strong genre entries ("Answer Me"), absolute stinkers ("Mookie and Pookie") and daring, original episodes that broadened the scope of the television medium ("The False Prophet"). Like *Forrest Gump's* proverbial box of chocolates, viewers didn't know what to expect next and kept right on tuning in every week. The first season, now presented on CBS DVD, is very bare bones. The sole extras are previews for other CBS releases and a commentary track from George Romero for the series' pilot, "Trick or Treat." The DVD menu offers a single chapter for each episode, but each episode has five spots, including one for the opening and ending credits. The set will stir up fond memories to the fans that discovered the series on independent TV stations after a late night of carousing. Enjoy!

Disc One

"Trick or Treat"

Directed by Bob Balaban

A miserable shopkeeper (Barnard Hughes) invites the children of a small farming town to his booby-trapped mansion on Halloween for a treasure hunt: a stack of bills, with the winner having their family's debts discharged and forgiven. It all backfires terribly. The series' pilot, a very strong curtain raiser with monsters galore, and a stern moral delivered with a laugh and a tickle.

"The New Man"

Directed by Frank De Palma

A real estate agent (Vic Tayback) is approached by a boy who claims to be his youngest son. The agent returns home to find that his entire family is also in on the terrible joke, and that his failure to recognize his son is the direct result of his reoccurring alcoholism. A "rubber reality" episode that recalls Rod Serling's *Twilight Zone* series, the story ends with a shock conclusion.

"I'll Give You a Million"

Directed by John Harrison

A wealthy man (Keenan Wynn) offers his affluent friend a million dollars for his immortal soul. What at first starts off as a mean prank turns lethal when an unseen third party takes the agreement far too seriously. Satan vs. a reoccurring figure on the series, and here Of Scratch appears as an unseen Wilde-like dandy.

"Pain Killer"

Directed by Armand Mastroianni

An oily doctor (Farley Granger) offers to murder his patient's nagging wife in order to relieve his back pain. As expected, the doctor is no ordinary slob and there is a big price to pay. Could it be, I don't know...? Satan?

"The Odds"

Directed by James Steven Saxwith
A crusty bookie (Danny Aiello) makes a wager with a mysterious man in an ice cream suit, that he will die at precisely eight o'clock in the morning. One set, a few actors, no special effects save a final dissolve, rounded out by the oldest trick in the book. Three words, Danny Aiello, story. A classic!

"Mookie and Pookie"

Directed by Timms Ranson

Eighties icon Justin Bateman stars along with axies flash-in-the-pan Tippi (The Birds) Hedren in this winsome story about a family's attempt to resurrect their dead son through a computer simulacrum. Weak performances and cheap sets peg this as an early dog in the series.

"Slippage"

Directed by Michael Gornick

A commercial artist (David Patrick Kelly) is infatuated to find that his portfolio has been misplaced, only to find other details about his life are ceasing to exist. The chief problem with this entry is that the main character is such a petty winner that the audience can't wait for him to disappear altogether, which he finally does. Two weak episodes in a row.

"In the Closet"

Directed by Tom Savini

A graduate student hears strange things coming from her closet in the room she rents from a veterinarian professor (Fritz Weaver). This episode is one of the most memorable of the series, due to its lovable albino monster created by makeup maestro Tom Savini.

Disc Two

"The Word Processor of the Gods"

Directed by Michael Gornick

In this adaptation of a Stephen King tale, Bruce Williamson plays a harried writer who gains a malfunctioning word processor that allows him to delete his shrewish wife and catfish son in order to let him rewrite a more harmonious existence.

A rare instance in the series where technology is portrayed as a saving, positive force amidst lots of stories involving evil mechanisms such as answering machines, etc.

"A Case of the Subborns"

Directed by Jerry Smith

In one of the series' most memorable episodes, Grandpa (Eddie Brackman) in a marvelous performance refuses to lie down and die and insists on decomposing on the front porch instead. With graphic monster makeup by Ed French in the service of a gross-out shock conclusion, "Subborns" is simultaneously one of the most horrific—and hilarious episodes the series had to offer.

exploring our common fate in a humorous and homespun way. A very young Christian Slater costars, and he would reveal his roots by taking a part in the *Darkside* film adaptation in 1986.

"Djinn, No Chaser"

Directed by Shelly Levinson

A young married couple's (Charles Levin, Colleen Camp) life is turned upside down after buying a rusty lamp containing a cantankerous genie.

This adaptation of a Harlan Ellison episode is played strictly for laughs, with mixed results. Basketball great Kareem Abdul-Jabbar puts in a cameo as the aforementioned tenant of the lamp.

"All a Clone by the Telephone"

Directed by Frank De Palma

Harry Anderson plays a hack Hollywood screenwriter whose answering machine takes on a malevolent life of its own. Anderson learns he can't live with or without the contraption in a twist on the standard "deal with the devil" gag. Roger Corman regular Dick Miller costars as Anderson's agent.

"In the Cards"

Directed by Ted Gershuny

A fortune teller (Dorothy Lyman) who provides her clients with only happy predictions is taken to task by having her tarot cards stolen and replaced with a cursed set. Grim and downright, Lyman plays a heavy metaphysical price for disrespecting the power of the cards.

"Anniversary Dinner"

Directed by John Stryke

An elderly couple (one of whom is played by the sublime TV regular Alice Ghostley) invites a young female camper into their home for an evening in their hot tub. You'll guess the shock ending is a mile away, but Ghostley is always fun to watch.

"Snip, Snip"

Directed by Terence Cavanah

Cult actor favorites Bud (Harold and Maude) Call and Carol (When a Stranger Calls) Kane star in this tale of star-crossed magicians dueling over a winning lottery ticket. Kane plays a dotty beautician with a lethal pair of scissors.

"Answer Me"

Directed by Richard Friedman

A displaced British actress is disturbed by an incessantly ringing telephone in a neighboring apartment. A one-woman tour de force, this episode shares a common link with most classic ghost stories in that not all the pieces fall in place and a lot is left for the viewer to decipher.



Tales from the Darkside certainly gave the devil his due (from "Trick or Treat").

Disc Three

"The Tear Collector"

Directed by John Driemer

Jessica Harper plays a lachrymose young woman who meets a mysterious gentleman (Victor Garber) who pays great sums of money to collect her tears in a glass sculpture. This episode has various nods to Harper's involvement in *Dario Argento's Suspense* (1977) with wailing voices on the music score and lavish art nouveau settings. Despite undercurrents of prostitution and fetishism, "The Tear Collector" has one of the most uplifting conclusions of the series.

"Madness Room"

Directed by John Hayes

A wealthy man with a heart condition (Stuart Whitman) is drawn into a deadly game with his gold digging wife and smarmy lawyer when an Ouija board tells them of a hidden room in their mansion that leads all those who enter into certain insanity and death. Predictable, but still fun.

"If the Shoes Fit..."

Directed by Armand Mastroianni

A sleazy gubernatorial candidate (the great Dick Shawn) lectures a hotel bellboy (John Zarchen) about how the American political system is motivated by entertainers and not leaders. To this end, the clothes he previously sent out to be cleaned returns as a clown outfit. Prossed into the costume by the eager bellboy, the candidate must decide if it's all just a terrible joke or if his conscience is finally catching up with him. One of the best!

"Levitation"

Directed by John Harris

A fanboy and his friend catch a former grand magician (Joseph Tusk) from *The Shining* reduced to playing his wares in a rundown carnival and beg him to do the "levitation without wires" trick—with deadly results. Based on the classic short story by Joseph Payne Brennan and fleshed out by Star Trek scribe David Gerrold, this episode is rich in atmosphere.

"It All Comes Out in the Wash"

Directed by Frank De Palma

A ruthless industrialist (Vince Edwards) learns of a Chinese laundryman (James Hong) who can wash away sins, leaving her clients with a spotless conscience. Are the laundryman's claims true or just an excuse for others to indulge their darkest ambitions? An especially weak episode, with an underdeveloped premise and unconvincing primary set.

"Bigelow's Last Smoke"

Directed by Timna Rancor

A chain smoker (Richard Romanus) wakes up to find himself a prisoner in his own ultra-modern apartment. A talking head on his widescreen TV tells him that he is the subject of an aversion therapy project designed to cure him of his nicotine addiction. Nothing is what it appears to be in this episode—what at first appears to be an ordinary sized smoke alarm is later revealed to be an enormous contraption that takes up the majority of the ceiling! The ending is a corker.

"Grandma's Last Wish"

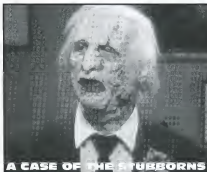
Directed by Warner Shock

An elderly woman (Jane Cornell) on the verge of being shipped off to an old folk's home by her concubine family wishes semierotic and limited mobility on her relatives. Equal parts tragic and humorous, "Grandma" deals with such serious topics as aging and alienation and then serves it up with a big shock conclusion.

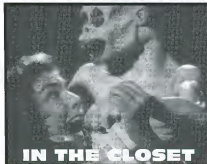
"The False Prophet"

Directed by Jerry Catta

Ronnie Blekley of Nashville (1975) fame steals the show as a haysed hair stylist looking for love in all the wrong places, specifically a small town bus station. A quarter-fed astrological machine warns her against traveling and false prophets when a suave street preacher (Justin Deas) arrives to sweep her off her feet. This episode has it all: bizarre visuals, sharp writing, directing and superb performances. Another strong entry.



A CASE OF THE STUBBORNS



IN THE CLOSET

GEORGE ROMERO'S DARKSIDE

INTERVIEW BY GREG GOODSELL

George Romero would redefine the American horror film with his *Living Dead* series. Along the way, he would lend his talents to the syndicated TV series *Tales from the Darkside*. The first season, now on a three-disc set courtesy of CBS DVD showcases some of the television medium's finest attempts at the horror genre, with entries written by Harlan Ellison, Robert Bloch and Romero himself. The director agreed to speak to *Screen Magazine* in between editing his latest feature film. He apologized that his recollections of the series were hazy seeing as it was (has it really been) 25 years ago, with him acting in a very limited created capacity. Our conversation begins below.

SCREEN: What exactly was your creative input to the *Tales from the Darkside* TV series?

GEORGE ROMERO In the series, my partner and I had script approval. My friend at the time was the guy named Richard Rubinstein. We had a wonderful story editor, Tom Allen, for two years. He was great to work with. It was very collaborative. I wrote the pilot ("Trick or Treat") and I wrote three or four other scripts. Gosh, I don't remember. It was so long ago.

All the scripts had to meet with your approval?

I don't think that we were thinking in those terms. I guess we were copycatting *Twilight Zone* and the old popular ones, like *Night Gallery* and that type of thing. We were a half-hour format, in syndication. It was more of a business plan. We kept the budgets as low as we could, and we tried to give breaks to young writers and directors, for whom this would be their first shot at doing something.

Where was the series filmed?

They were filmed in New York and Los Angeles. My offices were in Pittsburgh. We shot these episodes in New York and L.A. where we had access to talent and stages, which we didn't have in Pittsburgh.

Do you have any memories of working on the series?

I was pretty much "hands off." I wrote the episodes that I wrote. I didn't direct any of them. I read the scripts, and looked at the episodes when they were done, but that's about it. I never experienced any of the work aspect of it, whether it was good or bad, it didn't affect me. At the same time I was working on feature films, the same company with my partner and I, we had a company called Laurel Entertainment. I was still working primarily on features. I've still never done any television. I've never "hands on" directed any television.

What episodes did you write?

I wrote one with Jerry Stiller called "Devil's Advocate," and that's the only one that I actually remember, that I remember the title off. As for the most popular episode, I couldn't tell you. I didn't do any of the tracking... I'm sort of the wrong guy to be talking about all of this.

Have you received favorable reaction from the series from fans?

I do have some fan reaction when I travel to horror conventions and things like that. People seemed to have positive reactions to it, but nobody isolates any episode, I've never had any conversations about it and with anybody. You have to understand that it was sort of second hand on my part. I created it, and wrote the pilot, and then Richard got it financed. We had approval over the scripts, we both did, but it really wasn't my agenda at the time was feature films; so that's what occupied me most of the time. I didn't pay a lot of attention of what was going on with the series.

It wasn't in my department at the time. I was happy to get the series off the ground, and launched on the basis of my name, but it was not my big focus at the time.

Rubinstein was much more hands on with the series, and we had another partner Jerry Godblatt on the West Coast, so it was pretty much out-sourced.

I don't know enough about television, frankly. I approached it pretty much as I would approach writing a short story, something like that. They're one-trick ponies, they're very short, half-an-hour, there's really no one-act, two-act, three-act, and it just flies by. I was used to working in long form, so I approached these things as they were short stories, the ones that I wrote. I don't know what makes television work! I've never worked in television, except for this one experience; I don't have an opinion on what makes a television episode work.

Rubinstein's company is now called New Amsterdam Films, he's still in New York. Richard, after I left the company, I think he just basically changed the title, kept the formula going. It was called *Monsters*. I don't exactly know why that was, but I was gone by then. We still see each other; often, Richard had taken the company public, and I think he had wanted to concentrate on building a corporate identity. My interest was always in independent features, I was much more maverick than he. The relationship just naturally came apart.

So you were more interested in the medium of film than working within the structures of the television medium...

Or within the structures of Hollywood, for that matter! I never worked on either coast. I prefer to work in the middle here...

DVD REVIEWS

CAT IN THE BRAIN (AKA NIGHTMARE CONCERT)

Directed by Lucio Fulci

(1990) Grindhouse Releasing DVD

... I'm against the interpretation of psychologists which actually make me laugh," the late director Lucio Fulci declares in the taped interview, "Genre Terrorist," included on the deluxe two-disc set of *Cat in the Brain* courtesy of Grindhouse Releasing. "I have hated psychologists for years. What they don't know is their entire discipline is based on one man's need for money for cocaine. His name was Sigmund Freud and he needed money.



Therefore he invented it, copying from the Catholics, who are always first ... the confession. Instead of conducting it collectively, he did it individually. He was successful, and now these charlatans won't stop jabbering. Charlatans."

A frail man with discolored teeth and greasy hair, Fulci comes off as opinionated, brash and rascable, in the best kind of way. Beginning his career in musicals and comedies, Fulci would craft intricate and stylish thrillers such as *A Lizard in a Woman's Skin* (1971) until receiving his highest accolade as the maker of horror pictures with exploit gore in the 1980s. It has been said that a "hack" is not the same as a bad director, and it's heartening to know that Fulci, who passed away in 1996 after a diabetic attack, defended that position with a certain force and pride.

Fulci is even more aerobic and biting in the aforementioned interview in analyzing the worth of an unnamed female Italian psychologist. "If I ever meet this woman, I'll tell her to go to a concentration camp and stop being a psychologist ... And they can make lampshades out of her colleagues." This viewpoint is especially telling in considering Fulci's 16 mm one-off, *Cat in the Brain*, described by the maker in not so many words as being *Eraserhead* (1977) directed by an old man Crass, cheap and wonderful as anything else he ever directed, the film is one part thoughtful meditation on the responsibilities of the artist, one part low-grade shock show and a wholly cathartic exercise by a man that one suspects never took his title as the "Master of Gore" all that seriously. Fittingly, it stars Fulci as a harried film director racing to meet the sanguine expectations of his demanding audience while fending off the condemnations of critics eager to scapegoat what they perceive to be symptoms of societal decay. Under increasing stress, Fulci seeks treatment from an evil psychiatrist (Brett Halsey), who we first see cooking a chunk of thigh carved from a dead young woman. The pre-Hannibal Lecter headshrinker, not content to keep his proclivities to himself instructs Fulci while under hypnosis that he will undergo fugue states where he will experience scenes of extreme violence and perverse sexuality, giving the doctor opportunity to indulge in several gory scenarios of his own devising ... in short, it gives the producers ample opportunity to piece together several unrelated snippets of gory and tawdry scenes from unrelated films, much in the manner of those 1980's horror compilation VHS tapes.

Viewing *Cat in the Brain* today will bring mixed feelings to the genre fan. Many will feel nostalgic for the atmospheric Euro-shockers of Fulci's day, and may be taken aback on just how shoddy and obvious the gore effects are. It will be apparent to the most untrained eye that the featured charnaws are tearing into mannequin limbs—human flesh doesn't break away like crockery under drill press, after all—and one will wonder if it's intentional. In several scenes, Fulci will view scenes of spectacular carnage only to apathetically shrug them away.

One will also have misgivings that the type of gory fun that Fulci and company indulged in years past is now totally outdated. Serious, "artistic" filmmakers have since latched on to using explicit violence to further their agendas (*Martyrs* and *Irreversible* anyone?), and the ersatz thrills offered by this era of genre film (*Cannibal Holocaust*, and a few others excepted) seems quaint and antiquated when stacked against contemporary "torture porn" thrillers.

Grindhouse Releasing has done a bang-up job in their two-disc set of a minor film from an essentially minor director. Seeing as *Cat in the Brain* is a compilation of scenes cribbed from numerous sources (and has never looked pristine under the best of circumstances), the quality of the DVD is remarkably consistent. The menus likewise show a great deal of wit and care, brimming with detail. This writer is especially delighted with an animated bit of business involving the titular cat and a severed eyeball when one uses the command for bonus features on disc one. The feature film has a lavish selection of 47 chapter stops, and one can choose the English or Italian language dialogue track, with optional English subtitles. Extras included on the first disc include stills and advertising materials for the film, as well as an interview the director granted at a New York Fangoria Convention shortly before his death. In defending his choice of genre, Fulci, (through an interpreter) exclaims that director Mario Bava was a great animal lover and that "Argento loves only himself!"

Disc two is especially Fulci-some. There are two filmed interviews with Fulci, the aforementioned "Genre Terrorist" along with "The Television Years." Actor Brett Halsey is also interviewed, detailing his fascinating peripatetic journey as an actor in mainstream American movies and TV in his years in Italy. Both Fulci and Halsey are featured in extensive read-only biographies as well. Actors Jeffrey Kennedy, Sacha Mena Darwin, and Malesa Longo are gathered under the heading of "Memories of Lucio" and relate their favorite anecdotes about the director. But that's not all—the boys at Grindhouse have packed the second disc with previews of coming attractions for other releases such as *Cannibal Holocaust* as well as mouth-watering rarities that have yet to hit digital—*An American Hippie in Israel* (1972) and *Massacre Mafia Style* (1978). There is a grand total of 14 trailers in all!

While Lucio Fulci is still dismissed as a "hack" in many quarters, his films are experiencing increasing popularity. Analyzed and celebrated in countless books and magazines, Fulci's most minor and negligible films are now finding a ready audience in the digital age. As it has been said about silent screen comedians Laurel and Hardy, who likewise were denounced by the film critics of their era, it appears that Fulci only found favor with those who went to the cinema ...

Greg Goodsell



An Italian lobby card for *Nightmare Concert*
aka *Cat in the Brain*.

GIRLS IN CHAINS
(a.k.a. **SCHOOLGIRLS IN CHAINS**
or **LET'S PLAY DEAD**)

Directed by Donald M. Jones
(1973) Code Red/Exploitation Digital DVD

Sullen, reserved Frank (excellently played with brooding intensity by Gary Kent, who also doubled as the movie's production manager) and his retarded, infantile brother John (a genuinely creepy portrayal by John Stoglin) are a couple of severely demented misogynistic wackos who get their sick kicks abducting lovely young ladies and holding them hostage in the dingy basement of their remote countryside home. Of course, the decidedly unwholesome sibling pair treat said gals like complete animals and play all sorts of depraved games with them (John in particular likes to play twisted adult versions of doctor and leprolog with the girls).

Writer/director Donald M. Jones (*The Forest*) does a bang-up job of creating and sustaining a dark, grim and seamy tone that never lets up for a minute and stays bitterly true to itself right until the perfectly depressing bumper ending. While not that graphic, this film still manages to cast a powerfully bleak and unsettling spell because of its unsparingly harsh and gloomy oppressive atmosphere: a pervasive sense of foul dread and unease hangs heavy throughout like some kind of wretched invisible fog. The uniformly sound acting from the capable cast helps out a whole lot: veteran B-movie thespian Kent delivers a bravura characterization as a soft-spoken psycho who's prone to frightening sudden mood swings. Leah Tate, Merrilee Lynn Ross (Perry King's pregnant wife in *Class of 1984*), and Suzanne Lund are solid and credible as the brothers' hapless and scared victims, and Stoglin makes your skin crawl with his full-bore lunacy as the single most unnervingly unbalanced man-child fruitcake this side of Sid Haig in *Spider Baby*. Jones' sordid script covers all the necessary slimy exploitation bases: we've got rape (the scene with Frank forcing himself sexually on one of the ladies is pretty ugly and upsetting stuff), nudity, incest, perversion, voyeurism, soft-core sex, and cold-blooded murder. Ron Garcia's rough cinematography gives the picture a properly grainy and unpolished look. Josef Powell's offbeat score neatly alternates between groovy jazz and droning atonal weirdness. The Code Red DVD pulls out all the stops as far as tasty extras are concerned: Besides a widescreen anamorphic presentation of a beat-up, but overall acceptable print, there's all of three separate commentaries (including one with rap singer R.A. the Rugged Man!), interviews with Kent and Jones, a brief photo gallery, the original theatrical trailer, and trailers for four other flicks offered by the same label.

Joe Wawrzyniak

LAST HOUSE ON THE BEACH
aka **LA SETTIMA DONNA (THE SEVENTH WOMAN)**
aka **TERROR**

Directed by Franco Prosperi
(1978) Severin/Ryko DVD



Okay, first things first. Just what do we want to call this movie? Well, let's start with the original Italian title. Perhaps *"The Seventh Woman"* is a tribute to the Val Lewton classic *The Seventh Victim*? Highly unlikely—director Franco Prosperi (*Mondo Cane*, *Farwell! Uhole Tom*, *The Wild Beasts*, etc.) is hardly a master of subtlety and the films bear no resemblance whatsoever. Perhaps it's a play on *"Six Women for the Murderer"* (Mario Bava's *Blood and Black Lace*)? Well, closer. It is a violent Italian horror film in which women are endangered and abused... but no, the approach is still all wrong. We move on. They called this film *Terror* on at least two different U.S. video releases... well, that's as generic as it gets, and yet the title still fits better on a completely unrelated (though superior) Norman J. Warren thriller made virtually simultaneously. Now Severin has released it on DVD as *Last House on the Beach*... and I think we have a winner! It's the perfect title—it suggests a knockoff of Wes Craven's *The Last House on the Left*, and that's exactly what Prosperi delivered. The only problem is that the title only appears on the DVD case—start the movie and we're right back to *La Settima Donna*. Whatever you want to call it, the film can trace its roots back to Craven's trend-setter, but its closest American model is actually 1975's *Trip with the Teacher*, a Crown International release which slipped under the horror radar (thanks to its exploitation ad campaign) and assailed unsuspecting audiences

with Zalman King attempting to out-Hess David Hess himself as he and his buddies tormented a group of schoolgirls and their caretaker. In this variant, Fiorinda Bolkan (Fulci's *Don't Torture a Ducking*) is cast as Sister Cristina, a nun overseeing her own group of young female charges in a beachfront villa as they rehearse Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for an upcoming performance. The idyllic backdrop is soon invaded by a group of desperate (and psychotic) bank robbers led by Ray Lovelock (the hero of *Let Sleeping Corpses Lie*). Formula follows: humiliation and rape give way to violence and revenge (at the expense of Cristina's godlike restraint). But the film, try as it might, never matches the intensity of its legitimate predecessors (nor that of its most inspired followers, notably the aforementioned *Trip*), mainly because it neglects to build up viewer identification with either the victims or the tormentors before they have at each other—the film retains what Stateside interest it has on the limited strength of its cast and director amongst Euro-horror completists. Severin's announcement of the premiere of the "complete and uncut" version of this item heralds little more than the presence of the original Italian title sequence and the film's presentation in widescreen format: those familiar with the local Terror tapes will notice that Bolkan's most humiliating scene remains just as visibly choppy as it ever was. Audio is served up in the English-dubbed version exclusively, but the Italian and German trailers have both been included as extras. The one major supplement is a retrospective interview with Ray Lovelock, in which the actor discusses his career in general before focusing on the film at hand. Oh, and if you want to sing along with Ray? Look for the Easter egg.



Shane M. Dillmann

DEAD OF NIGHT

Directed By Dan Curtis
(1977) Dark Sky DVD



Dark Shadows creator Dan Curtis was responsible for many a 70s television "monster classic" adaptation (*Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, et al), but one pet project of his never quite got off the ground—a weekly series to be known as *Dead of Night*. Curtis created no less than three separate pilots for this project—and Dark Sky has now served up two of them at once. The best known of these pilots was the one that did not air under that title: 1975's *Trilogy of Terror* remains one of the most unforgettable horror shows ever created for the small screen (though it did not lead to a regular series with or without Karen Black). Curtis's follow-up was another Richard Matheson-scripted triple-bill, this time sporting Curtis's pet title (itself first used for yet another anthology—the acclaimed British production of 1945). The new *Dead of Night* opens with a spoken narration identifying the title as a state of being unrelated to the time of day (perhaps optimistically invoking *The Twilight Zone*) and promising three tales: one of imagination, one of mystery—and one of horror. The buildup thus established, Curtis opens with the mildest story, "Second Chance" (adapted by Matheson from a short story by Jack Finney of *Body Snatchers* fame). Ed Begley, Jr. stars as a young man known as Frank, whose passion for restoring an antique automobile is rewarded with an unexpected trip back in time to the 1920s, where he finds himself in the position of correcting a romantic gap in his family history. While pleasant enough, the segment is far too derivative of superior variations of the same premise seen in the aforementioned *Twilight Zone*, and it scarcely sets an ominous tone for this project. "No Such Thing as a Vampire" kicks things up a notch when Dr. Gheria (Patrick Macnee: *The Avengers*, *The Howling*) prevails on Horst Bucholz (*The Magnificent Seven* and *One, Two, Three*) to help him destroy the vampire that simply has to be preying on his wife Alexis (Anjanette Comer of *The Baby*). It's not hard to guess that the good doctor has ulterior motives, but the period piece plays out enjoyably enough (and benefits greatly from an appearance by Elisha Cook, Jr. in his trademarked "jittery servant" persona). But as with *Trilogy of Terror* (you do remember the Zuni doll, right?), Curtis saves the best and most intense for last: "Bobby" is a two-character drama in which grieving, guilt-wracked mother Joan Hackett turns to the supernatural to raise her dead, drowned son (Lee H. Montgomery of *Ben and Burnt Offerings*) from his watery grave. The ritual would appear to be a success... at first. It will suffice to say that this one becomes a terror tour de force worthy of *Trilogy* itself. (In 1991, Curtis saw fit to remake this as the second installment of the belated *Trilogy of Terror II*—but as with that follow-up's anticlimactic return of the Zuni doll, it simply worked better when folks weren't prepared for what was about to hit 'em.

Dark Sky's DVD provides a more than acceptable transfer (naturally, letterboxing and stereo sound aren't issues here) of the anthology and comes up with plenty of bonus material dredged from the vaults. Approximately 15m of deleted scenes, outtakes and bloopers (mostly from "Vampire," but including several variants of the opening title sequence) are included—subtitles are provided for those moments where the soundtrack has been lost. Robert Cobert's score (very much in the Curtis tradition) has been isolated for separate enjoyment in an audio option, and a photo gallery has been provided. The major supplement, however, is the first pilot for *Dead of Night*: in its original incarnation it was to be an hour-long drama following the adventures of a team of supernatural investigators. The 1969 pilot episode "A Darkness at Blaiseden" introduces Kerwin "Sinbad" Matthews and Cal Bellini as they take on the case of Marj Dusay, who has just inherited the title property, only to find it haunted. The new owner quickly finds herself possessed by the murderous spirit of the original inhabitant (known as The Commodore), but as this was intended as a series pilot, she's ready to join the team of paranormal experts by the time it's over. Curtis fans will appreciate the retrieval of this rarely-screened item, but it isn't hard to see why this wasn't picked up as a series—it's slow going over familiar territory. The selling point of *Dead of Night* will always be "Bobby," but that's more than enough of a recommendation!

Shane M. Daltmann

www.cinemawasteland.com

From ALIENS to ZOMBIES and ALL THINGS in Between!

CINEMA WASTELAND

MOVIE POSTERS - COLLECTIBLES
RARE DVD and VIDEO - T-SHIRTS
AUTOGRAPHS - TOYS & MORE!

GREAT SELECTION!
UNBEATABLE PRICES!

For A Complete MERCHANDISE CATALOG,
Send \$3.00 USA & Canada (\$5.00 Foreign):

Cinema Wasteland
PO Box 81551
Cleveland, OH. 44181

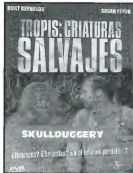
Phone (440) 891-8520 zombies@cinemawasteland.com

SERVING THE COLLECTOR (to Axe Wielding Madmen) SINCE 1987

* CELEBRITY GUESTS * NON-STOP MOVIES * DEALER'S ROOM *
* SPECIAL EVENTS * SURPRISES * AND MUCH, MUCH MORE! *

The CINEMA WASTELAND Movie & Memorabilia Expo
Is one of the TOP RATED Movie Conventions in the Country!

Held Every April and October, Outside Cleveland Ohio. See
our Web Site for what We have in Store for our Next Show.



SKULLDUGGERY

Directed by Gordon Douglas
(1970) Universal DVD (import region 2)

Two expatriate ne'er do wells Douglas Temple (Burt Reynolds) and Otto Kreps (Roger C. Carmel) working as mechanics in Papua New Guinea finagle their way on to an anthropological expedition led by a beautiful if stodgy lady scientist (Susan Clark). Penetrating the darkest regions of the continent following reels of National Geographic jungle native nudity -- among other ethnocentric lapses of taste -- Reynolds charms his way into the hammock of Clark and Carmel stumbles upon a tribe of orange-haired near men he dubs the "Topi." These missing links are adorable, docile and cry out to be immortalized as stuffed toys. The expedition then confronts myriad ethical problems; are the Topi unrecognized humans, possessing souls? In one scene, erstwhile priest Chips Rafferty attempts to baptize the critters in a nearby stream. Some decry the act as blasphemous, and the good-humored Reynolds turns the holy ritual into a splashing game. Evil capitalists then contemplate if the Topi can be utilized for cheap labor. A winsome Topi female named Topazia (Pat Suzuki) is later seen scurrying out of Carmel's tent in what appears to be a failed seduction attempt. Plot complications arise when Topazia is revealed to be pregnant, carrying Carmel's child! Returning to civilization under the cover of night, Topazia gives birth in a seedy motel room, and Reynolds is charged in the murder of the changeling. A heated courtroom drama ensues, with *Becula* himself, William Marshall playing a pivotal role.

With far lesser films coming out on deluxe, special edition-packed DVDs and Blu-rays, *Skullduggery* is a notable exception of a major American film consigned to obscurity. Available only on a Brazilian DVD label, the film apparently proved to be an embarrassment for all parties concerned. The story is only slightly removed from Jungle Jim epics of the forties and fifties, with elements of sexist macho fantasy with more than just a dash of Lovecraftian horror (think of his short story "The White Ape") tossed in. Directed by Gordon Douglas (Them!) and produced by Saul David (Logan's Run), *Skullduggery*'s sensibilities are tuned in to the macho adventure magazines that were then in their death throes on the nation's newsstands. The most egregious example of the film's outdated, sexist attitude is the scene where Reynolds and friends recruit hordes of topless native women, on loan from nearby brothels to paddle the expedition's rafts upstream. Clark gives them instructions and is met with stony silence. Reynolds flashes his trademark asshole grin and exclaims "They never take orders from women!" To its credit, it's the only film this writer knows of that takes on the theme of interspecies sex, but we never see the result of Carmel's and Suzuki's union and the entire final act of the film bogs down in conventional courtroom drama. Lots of philosophical and ethical questions are bandied about, and the results are overly facile and often embarrassing. In one scene that definitely dates the project, a militant Black Panther is brought to the bench and declares that the "Topi," with their orange hair and fair skin are the original descendants of the Caucasian race. This final bit probably brought chuckles to the inner city grindhouses of their day, but probably contributed to the film's lack of availability today. The *Planet of the Apes* series would tackle such controversial themes such as race, class, and religion with a great deal of humor, wit and sophistication. These films would earn an enduring place in popular culture. *Skullduggery*'s ham-fisted, insensitive handling of these same topics would result in the film being swept under the carpet after a single major television network screening, with no release to domestic video or DVD. It appears that Topazia's final fate, as a curiosity glimpsed through a cage would finally be visited to the film at large.

Greg Goodsell



THE MANIACS (I MANIACI)

Directed by Lucio Fulci
(1964) MYA Communications

A vastly different breed of film than the glib and gore-laden enterprises he would later become known for, Lucio Fulci's 9th feature film is a black-and-white slice of *la dolce vita* with several psychoses, predominantly sexually-oriented, depicted in a series of tossed-off segments, some mildly successful or simply amusing, and some just plain monotonous.

Credit is due to composer Ennio Morricone and by Gianni Morandi's "La mia mania", both contributing horn-heavy music that'll ring in your ears for days to come; it acts as a pleasurable separator between the many five and ten minute comic scenarios, brief respite between such sketches as "The Sicilian Hitchhiker" and "The Insolent Employee". Ditto the theatrical trailer, which features the theme under a narrator intoning that this film doesn't need a trailer, for we all have one form of mania or another!

I Maniaci is also noteworthy as the only collaboration between Fulci and the raven-haired hypnotic beauty Barbara Steele, then already an icon to be reckoned with thanks to her participation in Mario Bava's *Black Sunday* and a mysterious turn in Fellini's *8 1/2*.

Steele's segment, "The Hobby", pairs her with Gaia Germani (Bava's *Hercules in the Haunted World*) as a pair conversing over the possibilities of their lover's infidelities, dancing, dipping, and playing along to the party games going on in the interim; they name-check Truffaut's *Jules and Jim* as a potential model to live their lives off of, before agreeing that it's a marvelous film.

Lisa Gastoni (Antonio Margheri's *Wild, Wild Planet*) turns up in "The Sport", alongside Franco Fabrizi (Fernando di Leo's *Manhunt*); those are the only segments for which they appear, a marked contrast to Walter Chiari (Luciano Ercoli's *The Rip-Off*), who appears in 4, the last of which he's a fortunate cogler to a striptease.

While the Steele-Fulci segment has become of interest after-the-fact, the rest of *I Maniaci* is but fleeting fun. The humor is characteristic of Italian films of the period, but instantly forgettable. Only the most dedicated admirers of either should bother to seek it out.

Aaron Graham

KISS NAPOLEON GOODBYE

Directed by Babeth Mondini
(1990) Cult Epics DVD

Is Lydia Lunch an actual person or is she a savvy comic persona ala Andy Kaufman's Tony Clifton? Hopefully, it's the latter because I can't believe that Lunch is an actual human being and not a brilliantly observed parody of a performance artist. Nobody is this pretentious, self-important or humorless and nobody could loudly proclaim that, "war is menstrual army" without cracking themselves up. Lunch has to be a put-on—the alternative is far too depressing.

Unfortunately, there is some compelling evidence that suggests she's more than the art world's answer to Neil Hamburger. After all, Lydia founded the short lived No Wave band Teenage Jesus and the Jerks, and during the mid-eighties, she was the darling of the, now largely irrelevant, transgressive film movement. In fact, regular readers of the old analog version of *Film Threat* might remember her starring in such films as Richard Kern's *Fingered* and Amos Poe's *Subway Riders*. *Kiss Napoleon Goodbye* is a long-forgotten obscurity, notable only for an early appearance from former Black Flag frontman Henry Rollins.

In the film, Lunch and spoken word performer Don Bajema play Hedda and Neal, two lovers whose rocky relationship is put to the test when Hedda's former boyfriend Jackson (Rollins) pays a visit to their isolated country home. Although Hedda claims she's no longer interested in Jackson, she almost immediately strikes up an affair with him. All too aware of his wife's infidelity, an angry and jealous Neal drowns his sorrows through the soothing powers of alcohol and carpentry. Meanwhile, in a series of startling subplots, the house appears to be haunted by the ghost of Napoleon who tries—but fails—to frighten the residents with heavy handed symbolism (such as a nude woman standing spread eagle over a sizzling frying pan as blood slowly drips from her vagina, and an elderly man who absently shoves a power drill through his forehead).

Co-written and directed by Babeth Mondini with an evocative soundtrack by J.G. Thirlwell (aka Foetus), *Kiss Napoleon Goodbye* attempts to be shocking in only the most calculated and boring way possible. The dialogue is laughable (example: "She's terrified of her own blood or the blood of my blood or the flesh of my flesh"). Luckily, the DVD's horrible audio mix means that most of what we hear is lost in a cacophony of background hiss. Clocking in at a mercifully short 35 minutes, *Kiss Napoleon Goodbye* will only appeal to people who must watch a grouchy Rollins stifle perform Tai Chi before they die (in other words, nobody).

Extras include the 51-minute documentary "Lydia Lunch: Paradoxia and a Predator's Diary" in which she constantly reminds us just how brilliant and outrageous she is even though her material consists of the usual hackneyed spoken word poetry clichés (you know, Hollywood is sleazy, television is evil, war is bad, the world is run by the evil patriarchy and their scheming penises, blah, blah, blah) and a five-minute spoken word piece that suffers from the same audio problems as the feature.

AMERICAN SCARY

Directed by John E. Hudgens
(2006) Cinema Libre Studio DVD

"When you cross the river Styx, and you're going into the world of the dead, you need a guide," says author James Morrow in the documentary *American Scary*. We hop in the hearse known as late night TV, and our horror host plays chauffeur, taking us on a ride of fear and fun. In a span of just over ninety minutes, *American Scary* waxes nostalgic with the old and new guardians of horror hostdom. Pioneers, such as Zacherley, Vampira, Ghoulardi, and Chilly Billy Cardile, are presented with a reverence only a graveyard shift host can hold.



Many baby boomers got their first taste of the macabre from these after midnight babysitters. While mom and dad were in bed, kids were glued to the tube, watching the monster movie M.C.'s every move. They were our terror teachers, and we were their faithful students.

All horror hosts are regional, and those personalities who were located in larger markets were the ones who received the most recognition. Los Angeles had Vampira (and later Elvira), the Northeast watched Zacherley, Pittsburgh had Bill Cardile, Chicagoans spent their late nights with Svengoolie (Jerry Bishop, Rich Koz), Californians enjoyed Creature Features with Bob Wilkins and (later) John Stanley, Philadelphians loved *Saturday Night Dead* featuring Stella (and Hives the Butler), and Cleveland's beloved Ernie Anderson, aka Ghoulardi, is still a household name in Ohio.

It is said that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Vampira spawned Elvira, perhaps the best known of all horror hosts. In its heyday, Zacherley's *Shock Theatre* was mimicked by many clone hosts, but when it comes to sheer adoration, no one can hold a candle to Ernie Anderson's Ghoulardi (1963-66). His character has lived on in the form of Ghoulardi look-alike The Ghoul (Ron Sued 1971-present) and the Son of Ghoul (Keven Scarpino 1986-present). Ernie's successors do him justice—both Ron and Keven have larger-than-life personalities. Fortunately, both performers have "best of" DVD collections for sale at their websites. (A Google search is all you need to find out more.) There's even an annual Ghoulardi festival in (where else?) Cleveland, Ohio.

American Scary dedicates special sections of the documentary to Ghoulardi, Zacherley, Vampira, and Elvira, and pays homage to lesser known hosts such as Dr. Lucifer, Baron Daemon, Marvin, and Sir Cecil Creape. I'm sure director John Hudgens tried to leave no gravestone unturned in his search for horror hosts. But why was there little or no mention of New Orleans' Sid Noel, aka Morgus the Magnificent, or Larry "Seymour" Vincent, Philadelphia's Dr. Shock, or Lou Steele, aka The Creep on WNEW's *Creature Features*? They were all well known in major markets, and should have received more attention.

Even with the few host omissions, *American Scary* is an ambitious project. Director Hudgens and producer Sandy Clark interview a who's who of horror enthusiasts. Among the prestigious lot are original *Mystery Science Theater 3000* host Joel Hodgson, Forrest J Ackerman, Don Glut, Bob Burns, Tom Savini, and Neil Gaiman. Film critics Leonard Maltin and Joe Bob Briggs add their expertise on the subject matter as well.

Horror hosts never die, they just reincarnate themselves. *American Scary* introduces us to a new generation of monster M.C.'s, who currently haunt the airwaves. New England's Penny Dreadful, Nashville's Dr. Gangrene, Washington D.C.'s Count Gore De Vol, and Remo D. (Screen's very own Shane Dalmanni) can be seen on local TV channels—and on the internet as well, allowing worldwide access to view what was once only available in certain regions.

Cinema Libre should be commended for presenting *American Scary* to consumers. The disc is loaded with many extras—trailers, bonus interviews, the original pitch reel, and a horror host wedding which took place at a Cinema Wasteland convention. An audio commentary track with Hudgens and Clark is here as well, but it's nearly impossible to hear the two men speak clearly, since the background audio from *American Scary* is a distraction. Hopefully, Cinema Libre will correct the audio on future pressings.

DOROTHY MILLS

Directed by Agnès Merlet

(2006) Dimension Extreme/Genius Products



An unnerving possession tale that creeps along at a snail's pace, *Dorothy Mills* really gets to the heart of its titular character's psychological issues, instead of attempting to go for more bizarre or gory set pieces. While it may be, at times, derivative of the bone-chilling atmospheric horrors of *The Wicker Man* (particularly in a party mock-up of that film's Pagan rituals) or *Don't Look Now*, the arresting, yet barren locale of the Irish island and a winning performance from youthful actress Jenn Murray help make it stand out from that very impressive pack.

Murray is Dorothy Mills, an erratic, ily white-haired adolescent struggling under the strain of being misunderstood in a tiny Irish village. She's been found strangling a young family's infant while babysitting, and a psychiatrist, Jane (Carice van Houten, of Paul Verhoeven's *Black Book*), is brought in to do some informal testing to determine the extent of Dorothy's maladjustments.

Jane's been having a rough round of life herself, as she's just recently lost her child and husband to a freak drowning accident. Facing stiff objection from the town's locals, save for an amiable relationship with the local Sheriff (David Wilmut), Jane faces an uphill battle to prove the innocence of Dorothy, who, we soon find out, has some unusual capabilities of literally being possessed by the unfulfilled spirits of the dead. These other identities manifest themselves in the form of your standard multiple personality disorder, which means the script, written by Merlet and Juliette Sales, leaves us on unsure ground as to if there's any actual supernatural elements transpiring, or if it's merely just a actual psychosis.

A direct link to *The Wicker Man* can be gleaned in the treatment of Jane's character, as her forthrightness and self-righteousness obscures her in the way of danger. The town, natch, has a closely guarded secret; and since she remains the true outsider, doom may spell her eventual fate. When everyone's in on it, there's simply no way to contact a police officer.

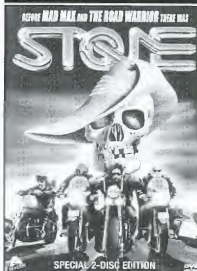
Merlet's direction is as deliberate as a slow roaster. She's not fond of cheap jolts, but more expressive, particular fears like the suggested nightmare of leaving your child in the hands of a babysitter who turns out to be psychotic, or dealing with multiple personalities all at once, never sure when the violent temper of one may strike. The fears are palpable and real, and not stretched to cinematic outer limits or absurdities.

As mentioned above, Murray is first-rate as Dorothy; she effortlessly glides on each idiosyncratic identity as if it were a new coat. Van Houten's Jane is given the uneasy task of being consistently immobile and melancholy, using her profession—and Dorothy's case in particular—to mask the real problems burrowing deep inside.

Anson Graham

STONE

Directed by Sandy Harbutt
(1974) Severin/Ryko DVD



While it's virtually unknown in America, the biker drama *Stone* is a bona fide cult legend in its native Australia. Simply put, a bike club known as the Gravediggers (led by writer/director Sandy Harbutt as "The Undertaker") finds its ranks systematically depleted by assassin or assassins unknown. The Gravediggers violently reject the assistance of a police investigation (as they hold the "pigs" in utter contempt), but the undercover cop of the title (Ken Shorter) gains their grudging respect and acceptance when he actually intervenes on their

behalf and saves several of their lives in the process. Almost before he knows it, *Stone* goes from "deep cover" to actually becoming part of the gang. Although the murders are actually linked to the proximity of the Gravediggers to an act of political assassination, the perpetrators are happy to lay the blame on a rival club known as the Black Hawks. *Stone* might be able to set the record straight, but not until the end of the film does he realize the depths to which he's in over his head. Hugh Keays-Byrne, who would go on to greater infamy as Mel Gibson's prime nemesis in the original *Mad Max*, makes quite an impression as the uncontrollable Gravedigger "Toad" (future *Max* players Roger Ward and Vince Gill also appear), while the real Sydney Hells Angels provided the bulk of the extras.

Opening as it does with Toad's acid trip, the aforementioned assassination and a quick succession of biker slayings (including a decapitation gag straight out of *She Devils on Wheels*), one might expect *Stone* to deliver non-stop aggression and violence—but while there's certainly action to be had, this is actually much more of a character drama, with the out-of-place *Stone* absorbing biker culture (including their private religious rituals and recreational drug use literally right under his nose) and simultaneously introducing the Gravediggers to simple pleasures they may not have experienced (one scarcely anticipates that a biker movie would include a lyrical mass skinny-dipping sequence, but there it is). At nearly 100m, *Stone* is an odd duck unlikely to satisfy hardcore American bike-exploitation fans at first glance; but when one approaches it as the *Down Under* alternative, it's refreshingly different and quite entertaining. Severin's DVD takes full advantage of the film's native popularity and serves up a two-disc set (single-disc movie-only version also available). Disc One presents the feature in a pleasing 1.85:1 widescreen transfer, along with the original theatrical trailer. Disc Two provides an impressive lineup of supplements; most notably "Stone Forever," a documentary by Richard Kuper which juxtaposes the story behind the film with footage of 1999's 25th-anniversary celebration (no less than 35,000 biker/fans converged on the original locations in celebration of their favorite movie!). Director Harbutt supplies additional "making of" materials, including makeup tests and a personal slideshow to round out the package.

Shane M. Daltmann

THE DEMONIAKS (LES DEMONIAQUES)

Directed by Jean Rollin

(1974) Redemption/Ryko DVD



In another era, pirate "wreckers" plundered the French coast, misguiding ships into perilous off-shore reefs with false beacons, looting the sea-ravaged remains of whatever treasures may wash ashore, and raping and murdering those unlucky enough to survive the shipwrecks. Most notorious of the wreckers is a quartet of immoral rogues led by an ogre of a man known only as The Captain (John Rico), so crazed and volatile it's rumored that he is haunted by the souls of those he and his crew have murdered. His henchmen, Bosco (Willy Braque) and Paul (Paul Basciglia), exhibit a fierce loyalty to him whilst harbouring

little allegiance to anything but their own lusts, whilst the fourth member of his team, and lover Tina (Joëlle Coeur), holds the reputation of being the most wanton and cruel of them all. Luring a passenger ship to its rocky doom, the team of wreckers get more than they bargained for when two luscious blonde survivors (Lieve Lane and Patricia Hennerier) wash ashore with their expected treasure chests of plunder.

Boating and raping the girls, Bosco and Paul budgeon them with rocks whilst the Captain oversees their skullduggery from Tina's arms amidst a rocky outcrop overlooking the beach, before leaving them for dead to retire to the neighbouring coastal tavern. Once there, the Captain becomes convinced that he is being plagued by the souls of the (presumably) dead survivors, and the tavern mistress, Louise (Louise D'Hour), knowingly acknowledges the Captain's delirium. But the wreckers' victims are not dead, and under cover of night make their paired way to nearby deserted cathedral ruins, encountering an enfeebled Devil (Millet Zimov) who offers them the opportunity of rage-infused revenge on their attackers.

Such akin to Spanish exploitation cinema enfant terrible Jess Franco, French film director and novelist Jean Rollin is a man whose cinematic output is best described as one of an acquired taste. Both men have worked with meagre budgets, exploring and recycling their favourite themes and visual predilections ad nauseum, often to the ostracised criticism of film reviewers and audiences alike. For myself, Rollin has always been a very hit or miss genre director, again much like Franco, but he has definitely had some interesting cinematic moments whilst treading the delicate balance between introspective adult-themed fantasies and surrealistic dream-like horror. Fortunately, in the case of *Les Demoniacs* (1974), Rollin delivers arguably what could be construed as one of his more accessible adult-fantasies. Coming after *Requiem for a Vampire* (1971) and *The Iron Rose* (1973), and before the intensely haunting *Lips of Blood* (1975), *Demoniacs* throws itself out as semi-surreal soft-core pornography spiced up with just enough elements of the macabre to maintain its status as a genre piece. It harbours the dreamy atmosphere of a regular Rollin title, but it also exhibits a robust, up-front eroticism that is most certainly indicative of its release period (much more so when one takes into account that additional material was shot for the film at the behest of the producers, then eventually deleted at Rollin's request in later incarnations).

All of the hallmarks of a normal Rollin production are present, albeit confined within a much more strictly structured narrative; the plotline of *Demoniacs* is nothing if not straightforward. The acting wavers the usual paths, straying between understated almost manneristic rigidity to wildly over-exuberant pantomime styled excess (nowhere more apparent than in the performance of John Rico as the Captain) and dialogue, where it is present, erupts in bursts of uncomfortably awkward soliloquy-like internal monologues expunged. The score is minimal, the visuals sometimes exquisite—sometimes threadbare and cheap, but the overall experience is undeniably Circus Rollin. For the regular viewer, that may sound like presentation of the auteur as a unique, eclectic niche that perhaps only students of film school will truly understand, however with *Demoniacs* Rollin's usual artistic flourish is reigned in more than one would expect and what is constructed is a straightforward tale of pirates, violence and supernaturally generated revenge. Admittedly, said plot is shoehorned into an outer wrapping of typical seventies drive-in erotica.

All of the hallmarks of a normal Rollin production are present, albeit confined within a much more strictly structured narrative; the plotline of *Demoniacs* is nothing if not straightforward. The acting wavers the usual paths, straying between understated almost manneristic rigidity to wildly over-exuberant pantomime styled excess (nowhere more apparent than in the performance of John Rico as the Captain) and dialogue, where it is present, erupts in bursts of uncomfortably awkward soliloquy-like internal monologues expunged. The score is minimal, the visuals sometimes exquisite—sometimes threadbare and cheap, but the overall experience is undeniably Circus Rollin. For the regular viewer, that may sound like presentation of the auteur as a unique, eclectic niche that perhaps only students of film school will truly understand, however with *Demoniacs* Rollin's usual artistic flourish is reigned in more than one would expect and what is constructed is a straightforward tale of pirates, violence and supernaturally generated revenge. Admittedly, said plot is shoehorned into an outer wrapping of typical seventies drive-in erotica.

From its opening, where its main antagonists are introduced one by one with narration, their faces superimposed over the burning wreck of a beached boat, *Les Demoniacs* travels many bizarre and eclectic paths; indeed, its introductory passage plays out not unlike a children's adventure film of the period, until Joëlle Coeur's character is introduced and we are made instantly aware that we are firmly in the folds of a soft-core horror-fantasy. Passages invite the viewer to occasionally squirm, almost in derision, at the amateurish acting and pretension-laden dialogue, whilst others conjure up some impressively ethereal, haunting imagery; it has to be said, the film is at its very best when its leading characters are divested from dialogue and Rollin allows his off-imaginative view to take over. There are some picturesque visuals filtered amidst Rollin's "expressional" ideals, and the climax itself bows the film out with a sinking visual, and metaphorical, set-piece. Though hardly as bold as many of its peers of the era (*Redemption's* R1 DVD wisely includes a few of the more sexually charged scenes that found their way into export versions as supplementary deleted scenes) Rollin's *Les Demoniacs* is as good a place as any to start for those interested in his cinematic output. Like all of the director's works, it will gain its fans and it will have its detractors, but it remains a surreal and unusual excursion into obscure seventies erotica.

Michael Thomason

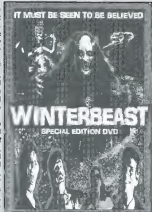
WINTERBEAST

Directed by Christopher Thiess

(1991) Winterbeast Ent. Group

A harried forest ranger (Tim R. Morgan) must contend with monstrous forces that are leaving a trail of dead bodies in his isolated mountain district. The irascible innkeeper (Charles Majors) of a nearby lodge refuses to shut his doors in order to take in money from the tourist trade. Are the dispossessed, demonic forces of the former Indian tribes at work, threatening to unleash a flood of stop-motion monsters into the commonplace? It will cost you \$7.99 from the film's Web site in order to find out.

Winterbeast. O Winterbeast, where to enumerate your countless charms and pleasures? At first glance, *Winterbeast* has all the earmarks of any other bad, direct-to-video horror film that cluttered remainder bins in the eighties and nineties. A cast and crew gathered far, far away from either New York or Hollywood, in this case Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Continuity issues, such as hairstyle and costume changes in mid-scene, the lead characters' moustache varying in length and color. A paucity of camera set-ups, many scenes consisting of a single master shot. Flashed lines left in to save on film stock. And still—O Winterbeast, thou hast an unspeakable beauty none can deny. Like so many of its ilk, *Winterbeast* weathered a stop-start production schedule and was plagued with many of the same problems faced by low-budget productions. Quite unlike other bad horror movies of its era, *Winterbeast* can boast of being shot on film, and features such "old school" charms such as constructed sets and stop-motion monsters. One has to place it in a historical context when other fly-by-night features were shot on video, and on existing locations. Audiences respond favorably to any film that tries to outstrip its budgetary limitations, akin to Edward D. Wood Jr. insisting on building a graveyard set out of paper and glue in lieu of just grabbing shots at a nearby bonfire for his *Plan 9 from Outer Space* (1959). The sets in *Winterbeast* assault the eyeballs. Wobbly, and crammed to the rines with bits of trivia shot kitch as set dressing, the eye wanders about during the film's many scenes of uninterrupted dialogue.



The filmmakers at some point must have realized that they weren't making high art and declared "aw, screw it!" during production, since elaborate special effects shots with stop-motion monsters are repeatedly and deliberately spilt with the inclusion of human figures sculpted on the spot from Play-Doh! The people behind Winterbeast chuckle at their own chutzpah on the DVD's commentary track. To see if a happy-set translated into a happy audience will be up to the viewer to decide.

Notably, the one scene that Winterbeast is best remembered for is one not involving monsters or special effects. The innkeeper, chortling over his own complicity in the various murders, celebrities by donning a cheap paper clown mask while playing a scratchy 78 of "So Long at the Fair," and dancing about a room strown with corpses. While the filmmakers congratulate themselves over the originality of this one clever bit, it seems to the reviewer that they're just replicating the scene where Dean Stockwell lip-synchs Ray O'Brien's "In Dreams" from the David Lynch film *Blue Velvet* (1986). Rob Zombie appears to have been fond of this as well—note the scene where Sherie Moon-Zomba yamps along to "I Want to Be Loved By You" in *House of 1000 Corpses* (2003). Like every horror film ever made, Winterbeast has since garnered a cult following and its makers have responded in kind with an extras-packed DVD. You have the film itself, chapter stops, the aforementioned commentary track, and special features that are for once necessary to appreciate the project at hand. Toggle over to the special features and you will get deleted scenes that feature footage which show the tates of several characters who were introduced in the main feature, and then dropped out of the narrative altogether (hatch, they all got killed by monsters!) This section also features footage shot on video entitled "Soap Opera," scrapped because the producers didn't like the visual quality. There is a photo section, a "making of" feature and an informal chat by the film's musical composer presented as an Easter egg. You really can't imagine a better time with a bad film.

Greg Goodsell

THE SINFUL DWARF (DVAERGEN) (1974) Severin Films DVD

The Sinful Dwarf, or, as it was called in its native country, *Dvaergen* ("The Dwarf"), is a true oddity in Danish film history. Although labelled as a "Danish Porno Horror Film" when it was released domestically, there is practically nothing definitively Danish about the film—besides some heavy accents and a few out-of-door shots barely recognizable to Danish viewers. Shot exclusively in English dialogue and tailor-made for an international market, the film is a far cry from the usually light-hearted sex comedies, which the Danes were known for in the 70's. *The Sinful Dwarf* tells the grim tale of young girls lured into captivity, drugged and forced into prostitution by a demented dwarf and his domineering mother. Unlike its contemporaries the film has a profound atmosphere of depravity and decadence evoked by the bizarre combination of prolonged scenes of sexual sadism, repeated allusions to perverted childhood, bizarre outbursts of mock cabaret acts and of course the grotesquely rendered sexually repressed dwarf.

Prior to its premiere in a small Danish theatre in the winter of 1974, the film had been picked up for theatrical distribution by Harry Novak's Box Office International, and had already played in US theatres for a few months, infamously re-titled as *The Sinful Dwarf*. The film was later re-released as *The Abducted Bride* and also played in some territories as *The Reluctant Bride*. The US version distributed by Harry Novak was an export version short of a few minutes of strong footage. Present in the fully uncut Danish theatrical version were a few scenes of hardcore pornography as well as a couple of extra shots in film's jaw-dropping climax, in which the noble female lead is raped by the evil dwarf using his cane.

The film stars Torben Bille as Olaf, the sadistic dwarf laughing and leering his way through ninety minutes of sheer exploitation depravity, that will leave most viewers either gawking in disbelief or longing for a bath. Bille started his career in show business when he joined a joined a travelling troupe of artists when he was a child. Later he found a steady income in the Danish film industry, mainly working as property master on numerous comedies and dramas. Also, he frequently appeared in minor roles, having carved a niche for himself as the only dwarf actor in Denmark. Interviewed at the film's initial screening in Denmark, Bille proclaimed that he was proud of his role in *The Sinful Dwarf*, while also saddened that his mother would see her son appearing in a porno film. Nevertheless, he kept working in the adult entertainment industry, most notably Werner Hedmann's hugely successful "Sign" series. Bille was generally well respected as a reliable and amicable colleague—although at times his interest in the opposite sex would make him unpopular among his male co-workers. Bille could sometimes be heard inviting the women present on the set to try it out with a dwarf, accompanied by his usual leering grin. Precious little is known of Bille's private life, although many rumors have persisted over the years. Some of these rumors speculate that Bille was married in real life to Ann Sparrow, the blonde girl who played the female lead in *The Sinful Dwarf*. Other rumors will have you believe that Bille had a career in children's television prior to his role in the film. Although certainly fascinating to anyone who has witnessed Bille's unforgettable performance in *The Sinful Dwarf*, there is no truth to the speculation.



Although the exact details of the film's production still remain a mystery, sources indicate that it was financed with Danish, American and British currency. *The Sinful Dwarf* was in fact one of several exploitation films produced by brothers Bent and Aage Toommings's Scandia Films in the early 70's. Scandia Films had previously produced two x-rated features, which were both distributed in the US. *The Blue Balloon* (original title: *Vide Pomoyster*, which translates as *Wild Pomo Lust*) and *The Birthday Party* (original title: *Lidenige Leaboth*, *Lustful Lesbith*). *The Blue Balloon* was particularly nasty and bears a sordid resemblance to *The Sinful Dwarf*, being a doomsday story of a young girl lured into a life of hard drugs and prostitution. Despite its very low budget and crude antics, writer-director and film critic William Rotsler gave it a two-star rating in his book *Contemporary Erotic Cinema* from 1973, hailing its powerfully realistic scenes of deflowering and sadistic multiple rape.

Scandia Films produced 10-15 films around 1972, partly financed by foreign investors and shot with Danish as well as British cast members. Some of the films appear to have been standard exploitation fare, while others, like *The Sinful Dwarf*, combined elements of horror and exploitation. The majority of these films never made it into theatrical distribution and are today considered lost. Besides *The Sinful Dwarf*, only one of the films appear to have had theatrical distribution in US and Denmark, namely *Overkassere* (hedgehog sexplainer) (which roughly translates as *The Secret Passions of the Upper Class*), released by Box Office International as *The Loves of Cynthia*. A soft core drama set in a decadent high society milieu, the film featured a cast of British actors and actresses in the leading roles, most notably the nude model Maureen Flanagan cast as a former porn model intent on getting her hands on the fortune of a wealthy family.

Just as the full range of Scandia Films output remains unseen to this day, the true identities of the producers and directors responsible for making the films are still shrouded in mystery. Some sources indicate that the same person directed *The Sinful Dwarf* and *The Loves of Cynthia*, although the former is credited to "Vidol Raski" while the latter is credited to "Arnold Baxter". The film's American producer went by the name Jim Stevens and is described as a sophisticated and well-mannered gentleman. He stayed in the penthouse apartment in one of the best hotels in downtown Copenhagen and generously hosted numerous lavish parties, until he suddenly rushed out of the country without paying his bills.

Needless to say the coupling of explicit sex, drugs, prostitution, sadism and physical abnormality for the sake of entertainment without any redeeming qualities whatsoever did not fare well with critics in either Denmark or US. In Sweden the film received the dubious honour of being officially banned from theatrical distribution. In Denmark the film sold just a few thousand tickets at the box office, and was never available on any home video format until released on DVD by Another World Entertainment in mid 2008. Sourced from a Danish cinema print, that had miraculously found its way to the storage facilities of The Danish Film Institute, this release was apparently the first on any home format to include the full version of the film. For the film's North American DVD premiere, Severin Films have now lifted the aforementioned scenes previously only available in the Danish version of the film and spliced them onto a brand new HD transfer sourced from the negatives of the slightly shorter US theatrical version found in Harry Novak's vaults—making their release the definitive version of the film. Hopefully the world will someday be able to see what other sordid jewels were also produced alongside this wonderfully demented example of 70's exploitation fare.

Mads Jensen

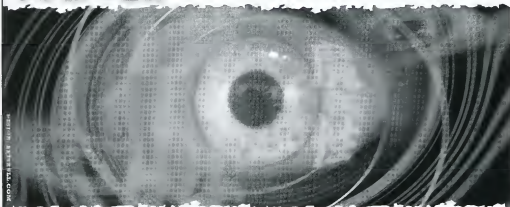


DIABOLIK

NTSC, PAL & REGION 1 THRU 6 DVD's

Demented Discs from Around the World

SECURE ON-LINE ORDERING • FAST, FRIENDLY SERVICE



IMPORTS • HORROR • CULT • ASIAN • ART HOUSE • ADULT • EXPLOITATION • EURO-TRASH

WWW.DIABOLIKDVD.COM

NECROMANIA

Directed by Don Miller (Ed Wood)
(1971) Euro-Cult DVD

Critics often mention Ed Wood's late period forays into pornography as unwatchable, but they really shouldn't. Granted, films like *The Only House in Town* lack the go-for-broke insanity of his earlier efforts but they still have a distinct charm of their own. *Necromania*, for example, won't be usurping *Plan 9's* spot in bad movie history, but it is a cheerfully incompetent cautionary tale about the perils of impotence and the joys of satanic ritualism.

Back before the days when Viagra greatly improved the lives of middle aged couples (and hacky comedy writers), victims of erectile dysfunction had to search out alternative and more extreme ways to rekindle their love lives. Some threw their money away on quack cure-alls—while other more desperate people dabbled in the dark arts. Danny and Shirley Carpenter (Ric Lutz and Rene Bond) are banking on the curative effects of the latter, although they're not too hopeful. If it doesn't work out, Shirley vows to go her way, while Danny can go his "own soft way." Thankfully, they have nothing to worry about because when they arrive at Madame Heles' (pronounced "heels") stately but blindingly red manor, their host Tonya assures them they will soon become, "insatiable." However, Madame Heles won't accept visitors until the stroke of midnight, and as Danny whiningly points out, it's only 2:30 in the afternoon. What are they going to do for the next ten and a half hours? Perhaps that insatiable lesbian down the hallway can answer Danny's question.

Like a number of Ed Wood movies, the making of *Necromania* (or as it's known by its on screen title *Necromania: A Tale of Weird Love!*) was almost more interesting than the film itself. To start with, Wood (under a Don Miller pseudonym) directed the film while clad in a pink nightgown. Miss "Vampira" Nurni was offered the role of Madame Heles, but declined on the grounds that it would be "career suicide" (a strange thing to say considering that Nurni's career died ten years prior to the making of *Necromania*. If anything, porn would've been a lateral move). And most importantly, two versions of the movie were produced because the original cameraman refused to film the hardcore sequences. Of course, shortly after the movie was finished, the hardcore version was lost and remained missing for over 30 years (both the hardcore and softcore versions are available on the DVD). Compelling back story aside, *Necromania* is surprisingly enjoyable. The dialogue is laughably bad (when Danny is frightened by a stuffed bear, Tonya tells him that "your wife was far more demonstrative when she saw the wolf mummy"), the soundtrack wildly inappropriate (everything from Benny Hill styled Yakkety Sax to Samba music plays over the sex scenes), and, the atmosphere generally insane (Tonya tells characters to squeeze a clanging dido—"just in case they need anything"). I also loved the fact that there isn't a minute that goes by where Shirley isn't mocking Danny's useless penis mercilessly, or the final scene in which Madame Heles forcefully screws a panicking Danny in a coffin. I absolutely adored this film and to quote Danny, "I had a delightful time."

Mike Sullivan

FAUST

Directed by F.W. Murnau
(1926) Kino International DVD



"Behold! The gates of hell are opened . . . and the horrors of the masses hunt over the earth! These are the first title card lines we read in F.W. Murnau's silent classic *Faust*, and from the opening of the film, we are already on a cinéfantastical thrill ride.

Mephisto (aka Mephistopheles or Satan) commands his army of darkness to invade our planet, so that they may torture humanity with war, disease, and famine. Suddenly, an Archangel appears and questions why the Devil has any right to do this. His answer is simple: "The earth is mine!" With that, the angel Gabriel reminds Mephisto that the earth will never be his, for man is good—his spirit strives for truth! To prove his point, the angel invites the horned one to take a look at a worthy candidate named Faust, who seems to embody all that is good in man. We see Faust teaching his students. He proclaims, "All things in heaven and earth are wonderful! But the greatest miracle of all is man's freedom to choose between good and evil." Faust's words are inspirational, but Mephisto isn't buying it. "He's a rogue like all the rest!" Gabriel wagers a bet with the Devil that if Faust can be proven to be less than divine, the earth will belong to the demon. The bet is on!

Mephisto brings the plague to earth. We see people drop like flies. The townsfolk beg Faust to save them. No amount of elixir or prayer can help the dying, and the weight of the world has been dropped on Faust.

Faust is overwhelmed. He throws books of knowledge into the fire—including his Bible. As they burn, he notices one of the books magically opens up in the fire to reveal a way to summon the Devil. He calls upon Mephisto to show himself—which he does, to Faust's alarm.

Things go from bad to worse when Faust accepts Mephisto's deal to renounce God. In return the mortal man will have the power to heal the dying townsfolk. Although at first his intentions are good, temptation and lust take over the once purehearted soul. Can he overcome Satan's stronghold and turn to righteousness, or does a pact with the devil lead only to eternal damnation?



**Faust contemplates the forces
of good and evil.**

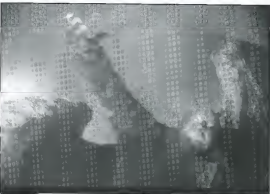
The story of *Faust* can be traced back to the year 1587; the film version is linked to the popular German folklore tale from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's story in (approx.) 1808. Murnau's film adaptation takes liberties with the original Faust story (i.e., the plague as Faust's catalyst).

Faust has inspired many films that have come after it. Prime examples would be: *Bodazzled* (1968, 2001); Ken Russell's *The Devils*; *The Devil and Daniel Webster*; and, *Doctor Faustus*, the Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor film from 1967. Even Walt Disney paid homage to *Faust* in Fantasia's "A Night on Bald Mountain" segment.

Like his 1922 masterpiece *Nosferatu*, Murnau's *Faust* is a visual feast. In countries other than Germany, most people were only familiar with the export print of *Faust* (which was distributed in America by Paramount Pictures). Now, for the first time in over fifty years, audiences all over the world will have the opportunity to view the original UFA German print which has only recently been discovered—and what a find it is! The domestic (German) edition shows striking differences between the two versions, in clarity as well as content. When both films are compared side to side, the viewer will notice that shot composition and time duration are at times drastically different. Even those, who are very familiar with the export print of *Faust*, will be amazed at how different the UFA print is.

The film was shot using two cameras. The export cameraman stood to the left of the domestic cameraman. This was done for the purpose of using the best take of each shot for the domestic negative. In some instances, a second-best take (or a rejected take) from the domestic camera (as opposed to the take captured by the second cameraman) was used for the export version. Those startling differences can be seen when watching both versions simultaneously.

Faust would be Murnau's final picture shot in Germany. After filming, he moved to Hollywood, where only one year later he directed *Sunrise*, which won several Academy Awards, including Best Picture for Artistic Excellence in 1929. Following *Sunrise*, he directed *4 Devils* (1928), *City Girl* (1930), and *Tabu: A Story of the South Seas*.



"No man can resist evil!"

From the IMDb: In 1931, before *Tabu* even premiered, Murnau died in a car accident in Santa Barbara. (His fourteen-year-old valet was driving the car.) Fritz Lang, who delivered the eulogy, and Greta Garbo were among the few who attended the funeral.

Kino's special edition DVD retains the export version of *Faust*, while adding the German restored print on the two-disc set. (Kino first issued the film on DVD in 2001.) The set features: a wonderful 53-minute "making of" documentary titled "The Language of Shadows, *Faust*"; additional new musical scores; screen tests; photo gallery; and, an essay by film historian Jan Christopher Horak.

The UK DVD on the Eureka! label (Masters of Cinema series #24) also contains both the German and export print, while adding an informative commentary from critics David Ehrenstein and Bill Krohn. Other exclusives: a 28-page booklet with new essays by Peter Spooner and R. Dixon Smith; a 38-minute video piece by critic and filmmaker Tony Rayns; and, "Faust: The Different Versions"—a 28-minute video comparison. The Kino and Eureka! DVDs each have their own merits; both are worth looking for.

Danayel Mayeski

STANLEY
Directed by William Greife
(1972) BCI DVD



While but one of many Florida-lensed thrillers from producer/director William Greife (*String of Death*, *Death Curse of Tartu*), Stanley has always been the easiest one to see, popping up (authorized or not) on numerous public domain VHS labels and included in Rhino's *Horrible Horrors* DVD collection (comprised entirely of Crown International titles). However, the video quality to date has been truly horrendous, and the film itself was brutally eviscerated for television—in fact, the cut version had so thoroughly entrenched the marketplace that many fans (this writer included) were prepared to accept that there was no other version, that the missing material had been sacrificed for a “PG” rating before the film hit theatres and would never be recovered.

It only took thirty-five years, but such turned out not to be the case. The fully restored, uncut version of Stanley has arrived in one of the most rewarding—and frustrating—DVD

releases of 2008 (rewarding in the wealth of recovered material and thorough supplementation; frustrating in the nature of much of said material and the fact that this release essentially represents the swan song of the collector-friendly BCI label). The title character of Stanley is a trained rattlesnake cared for Tim Cohopoe (Chris Robinson of *General Hospital* fame), a Seminole Indian and Vietnam veteran who has forsaken humankind to live in harmony with nature (specifically, countless pot snakes). Tim does allow the snakes to interact with specially-selected humans: he provides venom to a city doctor (screenwriter Gary Crutcher) for humanitarian purposes (understandable); and he allows a nightclub performer and her sleazy husband to use the serpents in their act so long as no harm comes to them (now, that's a leap of faith). Snake poachers and profiteers (represented by criminal Alex Rocco of *The Godfather* and his goon squad) had best beware, however, their culpability in the murder of Tim's father and their continued mistreatment of his reptilian friends marks them for lethal, slithering vengeance at the fangs of Stanley and his plentiful comrades. Yes, it's a “high concept” ripoff (“Wildard with snakes”), but Robinson plays it with deadly seriousness; the villains are truly heinous (sorry, and none of Greife's patented hokum [jila-jalla jellyfish man, supernatural shark, teenybopper dance melodies] is on hand to get in the way this time out). Stanley remains one of the director's most efficient thrillers, and this is amply reinforced by the restoration of over fifteen minutes of material to the BCI DVD release.

Much of the restored footage adds depth and understanding to the characters: there's the barely-repressed bigotry of the nightclub couple; there's far more explicit drug abuse (only hinted at in the TV print) on the part of “Psycho” (Paul Avery), and there's far more to the loathsome, antagonistic relationship between Rocco and his jaded daughter (Susan Carroll), which finally adds some much-needed believability to her previously incomprehensible lack of resistance to Tim's ill-advised act of abduction as the story nears its conclusion (which itself is hugely and effectively expanded). All of the missing footage in which snakes attack themselves to human flesh has been restored; and Tim's pain-wracked, flashback-addled psyche is given greater depth: never before seen on video is a sequence in which Tim “loses it” while serving dinner to Stanley and his mate Hazel (under covered dishes, no lies)—agonizing over the fact that even his beloved snakes demand live food as opposed to a pure vegetarian lifestyle! This scene's a real eye-opener . . . in more ways than one, and therein lies the truly frustrating nature of Stanley's restoration.

For a film that takes “respect for nature” as its theme and visits grotesque punishments on those who would abuse snakes, Stanley reveals itself to be a work of hypocrisy nothing short of contemptible; as Greife and company were in real life even worse than the snake-bashing villains depicted in their movie. The baby snakes bludgeoned to death with a rifle butt? Real. The mother snake getting her . . . blown off by the same rifle? Real. The numerous snakes beaten to death by a frustrated Tim near the end of the film? Real (though Robinson claims not to remember whether or not the snakes he himself whipped to death were actually alive at the time, the film speaks for itself). Oh, and while it would have been understandable to include footage of a live snake naturally feeding on a live mouse, not even that was the case in the aforementioned “dinner” scene—the snake was already dead, the mouse was being tortured by the special-effects crew, and everybody was ready to lose their lunch when it was finally put out of its misery. (The only instance of faked animal abuse in the film involves the nightclub dancer biting the head off a snake at the end of her act.) Scenes such as these are happily shared in the dual audio commentaries (Greife and Crutcher) and the accompanying interview supplements (which ARE exhaustive and extremely informative, make no mistake) with only a lip “I guess the SPCA will be all over us if we did that today” offered as a way of putting them in context.

Sorry to go on a tear here—while I'm a horror fan, I'm also an animal lover; and while I've endured (without actually pardoning) such material in everything from *Hunchback of the Morgue* to *Cannibal Holocaust*, I've never seen it so joyfully exploited in a film that pretends to condemn those who perform those very acts. Yes, I'd never seen a long, long time for this obviously cut film to be restored. Yes, the restoration makes a huge difference and works to the film's advantage. Yes, the BCI supplements (a Stanley reunion, an excellent 43m documentary on the making of the film, Greife's return visit to the original studio location, the aforementioned audio commentaries) are beautiful. It's true—this is one of the most significant genre restorations in recent years and the DVD is a must-have for all the right reasons. I got exactly what I wanted—and at the same time I lived to regret it. Congratulations to Greife, Crutcher and Robinson.



DEAD IN THREE DAYS
(In 3 Tagen bist du Tot)
Directed by Andreas Prochaska
and Stewart St. John
(2006) Dimension Films

Dead in Three Days has been tagged as Austin's first horror movie, but over on this side of the pond, the film is one we've all seen a million times. Well-directed by Stewart St. John and Andreas Prochaska, but unfortunately underwhelming, this slasher movie plays more like a slow-burn Giallo film without the scorch marks.

A group of party-loving twenty-somethings graduate from college and head off to get drunk and party, when they all receive a text that reads: “You'll be dead in 3 days”. Laughing it off as a prank, they decide to go on with their ordinary lives in their small fishing village, until Martin, son of the comic relief, gets kidnapped while in a public bathroom. He is bound and gagged, and tossed into a lake to drown. Maybe three days was more of an approximation? Perhaps the text meant they'd be dead within three days, give or take 72 hours? The whole three days premise never comes into play at all, and really just feels like a gimmick.

Martin's friends realize something isn't right, and when his body is found, they know without a doubt someone is after them. It quickly becomes apparent that this is a case of *I Know What You Did Last Summer* syndrome, Nina and the others later reveal the story of Fabian Haas, a boy who died when they were all kids, and for whose death they all feel responsible.

Could it be Fabian's dad coming to seek revenge? Fabian's mother? Or has Fabian returned from the dead to seek vengeance on something that happened almost twenty years ago? The remaining group decides to confront whoever is responsible, and venture into Fabian's abandoned house just to make sure it is empty. They find candles burning on an altar of Fabian's pictures and rotting severed heads in a jar. Our killer just wanders into the scene as if strolling through the park, and the film winds down with a disappointingly simple third act.

The main problem with *Dead in Three Days* is it doesn't do much to stand out from the pack, almost to the point to where it isn't even worth your time. The film is very well put together though, so I hate to write it off, but it was incredibly forgettable. There is, however, a memorable scene involving a beheading with a fish tank; otherwise, horror fans are stuck in familiar territory for the duration of the film. Most of the time is spent with the doe-eyed victims mourning or worrying, or endlessly talking to the police. There is almost zero suspense, and the killer is even revealed halfway through, by the characters themselves! Here is a bit of trivia—Jörg Buttgereit (*Nekromantik*, *Der Todesking*) wrote a version of this film that was rejected. That's a shame because his version would have definitely been one to remember. This one, sadly, falls into obscurity almost immediately.

Shane M. Dallmann

Jose Pinedas

SCORPION WITH TWO TAILS

Directed by Sergio Martino
(1982) MYA/Rykko DVD



From her residence in New York Joan Barnard (Elvire Audray) is plagued by restless nights onset by nightmares of shadowy tombs, a cult-like ancient race and visions of the brutal death of her husband, renowned archaeologist Arthur Barnard (John Saxon). Receiving an excited phone call from husband, who exalts the groundbreaking discovery of a long-lost Etruscan tomb from his excavations in Italy, Joan's eerie dreams prove prophetic when Arthur is attacked by an unknown assailant and killed mid-conversation. Immediately jetting to Italy to investigate the bizarre circumstances of her husband's death, Joan is beset by cryptic notes in his journals, unforeseen links to local crime syndicates that may implicate her wealthy father (Van Johnson) in an international heroin smuggling operation and jarring obstructions the closer she gets to uncovering the mystery behind her late husband's archaeological discovery.

Accompanied by business colleague Mike Grant (Paolo Malco), Barnard uncovers a convoluted path of intrigue surrounding her husband's death, as well as his recent excavations of a lost Etruscan tomb whose discovery Arthur was sure would rival that of the Tutankhamen digs of the 1920s. Grant and Barnard's explorative investigation unearths a relic crate stuffed with heroin, and the unlikely accomplice of photographer Gianni Andrucci (Franco Garofalo) who had worked with Arthur on his excavation. Inevitably, their collective paths also cross that of Paolo D'Amel (Claudio Cassinelli), who similarly harboured great interest in Etruscan history and Joan's husband's research. Yet for Joan, overwhelming sense of déjà-vu and whispers of immortals holds far greater fascination.

Commenced as a two-part mini-series for Italian television, before the concept was abandoned to make way for a theatrical feature, Sergio Martino's *Scorpion with Two Tails* (or *Murder in an Etruscan Cemetery*, to use one of its many export titles) is a film that far betrays its telemovie roots and intum may alienate many fans of Martino's more directly cinematic offerings. Those expecting an outlandish early eighties giallo will be sorely disappointed, and those expecting the usual adult-oriented excesses of the genre would do best to avoid the film completely. There is precious little blood (to speak of) split, nary even a hint of the regular sleaze or smattering of salacious content many would be accustomed to were they initially casting their minds back to Martino's early seventies psycho-killer opus *Torso* (1973), nor really anything much beyond exactly what *Scorpion* ultimately is: an episodic television thriller with more subplots and loose ends than one would expect crammed into its 98 minute runtime. In fact, it's relatively easy to ascertain where the first part of the series would have ended, and the second picked up from being that two major cameos conclude and another major character is introduced circa mid-film on the back of what was clearly designed as a "fill-in" wrap-up to the first episode.

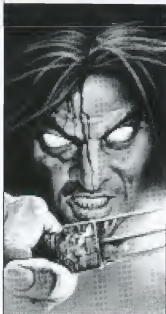
Of the cast, Martino is granted one of his most wooden leading ladies in Elvire Audray, later to appear in Mario Gariazzo's belated entry in the cannibal cycle, *Amazonia: The Catherine Mills Story* (1985), as Joan Barnard; though she obviously delivered her lines in English, Audray seldom ever delivers a performance throughout the film's duration that could even generously be afforded the descriptive of "believable". Being focal to the narrative, and jarringly flat by default, thankfully Audray is surrounded by some Italian industry veterans that manage to detract from her amazing mediocrity. Mid-period Fulci regular Paolo Malco pops up as Audray's business colleague, and the late great Claudio Cassinelli arrives mid-film as Saxon's rival archaeological adversary.

However, American stars John Saxon and Van Johnson are given precious little to do in their brief cameos, although in a small selection of deleted (original television) scenes that appear on MYA Communications R1 DVD there is hint that Saxon's character might have played a somewhat greater part in the originally planned version of the mini-series. Fans of late B-movie king Bruno Mattei may get a small kick out of the fact that his *Hell of the Living Dead* (1980) lead, Franco Garofalo, pops up here as a wine-guzzling photographer-cum-grave robber, being that the actor has seldom been seen abroad much outside of that film and Mattei's nunsploitation piece, *The Other Hell* (1980).

Scorpion with Two Tails (1982) is hardly what any fan of Italian genre cinema would confuse with "top tier" Sergio Martino product, nor would perhaps the average viewer for that matter perhaps find the film anything much more than a rather dated, somewhat bland, curiosity item. The transition from mini-series to cinema feature arguably did the production no favour, and a nebulous sub-plot concerning Audray being the reincarnation of an Etruscan temple priestess ends up given short shrift other than to spring a "surprise" supernatural sting in the tail to what is otherwise a fairly underwhelming climax. Unfortunately, the film reeks of being a rushed production, from limited locations and shoddy practical effects (heads twisted backwards on actors are achieved by simply by having them wear their jackets or shirts backwards) to Fabio Frizzi's score that has largely been recycled from his work on Fulci's *City of the Living Dead* (1980). As a curio, one has to commend companies like MYA Communications for dredging these kinds of skeletons out of genre directors' closets as a taster of their work away from their more widely seen titles, but as a largely unseen work from Sergio Martino's canon a prospective viewer could do themselves

was disserved that during the film's release.
Scorpion ends up being just a little too tame, and a whisker past meandering, to expect a contemporary genre-hungry audience to make a modern meal of it.

Michael Thomason



PHASE IV
Directed by Saul Bass
(1974) Legend/Paramount DVD

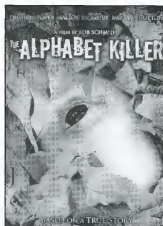
THE ALPHABET KILLER
Directed by Rob Schmidt
(2008) Starz/Anchor Bay DVD

When *Phase IV* first played on television in the 1970s, I hated it. How could it? A film about an army of super-intelligent ants declaring war on mankind? That sounded right up my alley! I eagerly reserved time for the first network showing (the film had passed under my radar during its theatrical release (I was approximately 10 years old at the time). I patiently watched the entire film waiting for the ants to gang up and attack a city—you know, metropolitan panic, people getting engulfed by the dozens . . . but it never happened. So, unfair as it was, I spent most of my adolescence under my first impression of a huge disappointment. Luckily, I gave *Phase IV* another chance when it popped up on late-night TV in the 80s—only then did I realize what I was really watching.

Phase IV remains of historical note as the first and only feature film directed by acclaimed motion picture title designer Saul Bass (*Psycho*)—and his approach here is just about as “mainstream” as his legendary credit sequences. The premise is set up simply enough—enough to fool me into thinking that this was going to be an insect-themed disaster movie. The aforementioned colony moves in on the inhabitants of a barely-populated desert community and driving farm families off their land. In particular, we witness the fate of the Eldridge family: Mr. and Mrs. Eldridge meet their demise not at the pincers of the ants, but at a burst of super-insecticide launched by scientists Lesko (Michael Murphy) and Hubbs (Nigel Davenport), who have set up shop in an isolated dome (studying the cosmic incident which they believe sparked the radical change in ant behavior). Daughter Kendra (Lynne Frederick of *Schizoid*), however, is rescued by the duo. And the three of them keep a lonely vigil, their efforts to understand and outwit the creeping invaders constantly undermined by their ingenious acts of sabotage . . . and construction.

The selling point of *Phase IV* is the amazing use of macrophotography (first deployed by specialist Ken Middleham with sensational results in 1971's pseudo-documentary *The Hellstrom Chronicle*) to depict the actions of the ants. One can't imagine that the insects were actually trained to follow a script—nevertheless, Middleham's camera captures them doing exactly what it takes to move the story forward. In one memorable moment, a tenacious ant drags a larger predator insect from its perch and drops it into a vital piece of equipment, causing it to short circuit; and another noteworthy sequence has one ant at a time succumbing to the effects of a chunk of solidified poison, the better to transport it to their queen so that she may assimilate it and provide an immunity for her future larvae. As the ordeal wears on, the breakdown of technology has a similar effect on the logic and emotions of the human survivors. Bass complained that his visionary ending was severely cut down by the powers that be at Paramount, but the essential point remains clear—humanity has learned its place. Paramount/Legend has released *Phase IV* in its bare a “bare bones” edition imaginable for the Best Buy exclusive edition: not so much as a theatrical trailer (which does exist: it's available on the compilation *42nd Street Forever: Volume 3*, for that matter) is offered. The widescreen transfer itself is acceptable, and, naturally, no twinking has been performed on the original soundtrack.

Shane M. Dallmann
57



Dawn brings a grisly discovery in the fields of Churchville, neighbouring town to Rochester, New York, in the body of pre-teen Carla Castillo, raped, strangled and dumped in the sodden ground. Tell-tale ritualistic signs at the scene of the crime suggest to Rochester police investigator Megan Paige (Eliza Dushku) that the constabulary may be dealing with a potential serial killer, pushing her partner, and fiancé Kenneth Shine (Cary Elwes) into uneasy territory with his superiors. The more Megan

investigates, revisiting key areas and re-interviewing family and friends, the more obsessed she becomes with the case to the point where, sensing the onset of a mental breakdown, her superior Gullikson (Tom Noonan) removes her from the case. Unable to accept her failure to break the case, and convinced she is haunted by Carla's wandering soul, Paige suffers a crippling nervous breakdown before finally attempting suicide.

Three years on, having lost her job and fiancé to her devastating psychological defeat, Megan garners a records clerk position back with the Rochester police, as well as balance to her mental well-being through the aide of Richard Ledge (Timothy Hutton) and his self-help group. Unexpectedly, another young girl, Wendy Walsh, is found dead, under strikingly similar circumstances to that of Carla Castillo in nearby Webster. Convinced that the girl's death is the work of the same sexual predator, Paige goads ex-fiancé Shine into allowing her back on the case in a consultative capacity with primary investigating officer Stephen Harper (Tom Malloy). However, it's not long before another murder occurs and Megan begins to find herself falling dangerously back into former routines that threaten both her objectivity and hitherto prevailing sanity.

Based in part, more than total, on the trio of factual child sex-murders that occurred in Rochester, New York, between 1971 and 1973 writer and actor Tom Malloy's adaptation of the "Alphabet Murders" for the screen inevitably joins an ever growing list of screen-adaptations of (predominantly American) serial killer history, albeit at the lesser end of the scale. With Rob Schmidt, director of the punchy, fast-paced backwoods minor horror hit *Wrong Turn* (2003), at the helm one might expect something a little grander, or indeed edgier, than the final product; however writer Malloy's intent was always to build a thriller equal parts *A Beautiful Mind* and *Zodiac*, which is an unusual collision of genres (and bigger films) if ever there was one. And returning with Schmidt from *Wrong Turn* is that film's leading actress, Eliza Dushku, here capably carrying the film with a solid performance as the critically unbalanced, and obsessive, police officer Megan Paige. Though Dushku is a far step from her *Wrong Turn* role, she is maybe not that far distanced from her TV character in *Tru Calling*, which intum signals *The Alphabet Killer*'s main failing: more than much of it is just far too familiar to make it stand out in a crowd.

At the beginning, things start out well by throwing us directly into the (understated) horror of the crimes, the investigators that they immediately affect, and the relationships of those interlocked and surrounding the case. But then, once the first ghostly spectre of a murdered girl appears, looking for all the world like one of the countless water-logged ghosts from multiple Asian horror films, things steadily go downhill. Joe DeSalvo's cinematography quickly adopts the cold, steely, colour-subtracted visual design of almost every serial killer opus post David Fincher's *Se7en* (1995) and James Wan's *Saw* (2004) and by the time the "stunt cameos" start rolling around there ends up an overwhelming sense of déjà-vu about the whole production. Of that "stunt casting", viewers may never see so many genre-veterans (of serial killer cinema) collected together under the umbrella of one production, admittedly a production decision but a distracting one nonetheless as genre viewers quickly end up commencing a game of "who's who" from the moment Gary Elwes (*Saw*) appears onscreen, through Tom Noonan (*Manhunter*), Michael Ironside (*Scanners*), Bill Moseley (*Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2*) and eventually the off-handed inclusion of Timothy Hutton whom many may recall appeared in George Romero's *The Dark Half* (1993).

For myself, by somewhere about mid-stream the abundance of movie references, hide-and-seek cameos, and decision to make the main protagonist so distanced from the regular viewer due to her issues of mental health and obsessive compulsive disorders, the fundamental core narrative of *The Alphabet Killer* eventually falls apart. I have no issue with a writer or director presenting their key character as flawed, or possessive of a psychological impediment, but when that element is utilised as the character's sole focus which thereby shifts the attention so far away from the main plot then inevitably something has to give in the mind of the audience. Especially when that element is played off somewhat larger moral and/or social issues such as the prevalence of paedophilia or the (perceived) all encompassing power of the church; at some point, without the benefit of an extremely skilled director, the attention span of the audience is going to be lost completely. Therein lies the focal problem with Schmidt's film; without a central character that regular viewers can relate to, and a few too many "clever" cinematic nods to other pictures, *The Alphabet Killer* ends up losing its focus somewhere around the commencement of the third act and never regains it. The finale reveal is too obvious, the epilogue unnecessary and almost afterthought.

One of the underlying problems with contemporary genre cinema, arguably cinema in general when it comes to the large market of American cinema, is that there is little if any originality present in current trends. When something does shine out from the rest as either groundbreaking or substantially different, by way of example *Saw* (2004) was something of a directional mover in genre cinema a few years back, sequels are green-lit before the returns are fully tallied and seemingly every producer on the block has a comparative film in production before the lamps on the projectors have grown cold. There is a wealth of (American) serial killer pop culture to be mined for film projects, but with the majority of the critical historical figures already having gone before the cameras, titles like *The Alphabet Killer* will continue to surface at least until the video-viewing public lose interest in them. Succinctly put, Schmidt's latest stab at peripheral-genre cinema is as bland and unengaging as one would suspect past its first act, trotting out its duration like an extended episode of *Law & Order: SVU*. Its resolution of an unsolved crime, channelling the ever topical clergy-paedophilia angle, is virtually anti-dramatic enough to almost ruin all that has gone before as well as trivialise its protagonist's mental health issues. That, perhaps, is analysing a little too deep and definitely far more deeply than the mediocrity of *The Alphabet Killer* deserves.

Michael Thomason

JUDEX

Directed by Georges Franju
(1963) Eureka! Masters of Cinema import DVD

A startling representation of poetic association and mesmerizing imagery rendered as a direct homage to Louis Feuillade's 1916 serial, *Judex* is directed Georges Franju's little-revived, but somewhat well-known, caped avenger action opus.

Opulently filmed in black-and-white, *Judex* captures your attention from the word "go" with a magisterial performance from magician Channing Pollock as the titular character, providing moments of elation by demonstrating tricks plundered from his stage show.

Rich banker Favraux (Michel Vitold) is the ostensible bad guy, a reverse Robin Hood who makes his money off of the underprivileged. *Judex* sets his sights on him, exacting an almost perfect revenge/comeuppance (banned alive briefly before being dug up to live the rest of his life in misery if he's unable to pay back those he's harmed).

With such a labyrinthine plot for its upright central, moralistic hero, *Judex* (Spanish for "Justice") is almost too complex to describe, but it's the majesty of the photography that should be centered on: shot by Marcel Fradotal, it's a marvelously, laborious film full of rich incidentals and grace notes. Sumptuous without being overbearing, it's pulp reverie punched up to high art.

Eureka's Master of Cinema's 2-disc set includes a 2nd Franju feature (1973's *Nuits Rouges*), extensive liner notes (newly translated works by such notables as Jacques Rivette), and an interview with Feuillade grandson/screenwriter Jacques Champreux, which runs just under ten minutes.

Arnon Graham

WINTERBEAST
IT MUST BE SEEN TO BE BELIEVED
THE ORIGINAL 80'S FEATURE! LOADED WITH EXTRAS!

SEE FOREST RANGERS BATTLE LIVING TOTEM POLES!
STYOMATION CREATURES TERRORIZE FEMALE CAMPERS!
A TWISTED LODGE OWNERS BIZARRE RITUAL!

WATCH THE TRAILER
READ THE REVIEWS
SEE THE PHOTOS
THEN BUY THE DVD

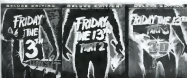
ONLY \$7.99

FREE ONLY WHEN YOU ORDER AT WINTERBEAST.COM

MINI POSTER! POSTCARD! FREE SHIPPING!

SPECIAL EDITION DVD VIDEO

WWW.WINTERBEAST.COM



FRIDAY THE 13TH UN-CUT: DELUXE EDITION

Directed by Sean S. Cunningham

FRIDAY THE 13TH PART 2: DELUXE EDITION

Directed by Steve Miner

FRIDAY THE 13TH PART 3 3-D: DELUXE EDITION

Directed by Steve Miner All titles issued by Paramount Pictures DVD

It's nearly inconceivable that readers of this publication would require any sort of introduction to the Friday the 13th movie series at this point, but we can all certainly take a couple of moments to acknowledge it in perspective today—whether or not you're a fan of the series. The results might surprise a you. Long story short: In 1978, John Carpenter's Halloween gave rise to the very top of the independent horror mountain, aided by fan word of mouth and near-constant critical acclaim. Enter producer Sean S. Cunningham, in need of a hit film of his own and having little to go on beyond an exploitable title and (even later) a high concept, rip off Halloween (that's not your reviewer making a dose of cynicism—that's straight from Cunningham himself). Cunningham's marketing savvy had investors tripping over themselves to become part of Friday the 13th, and by the time the finished product was ready for release, it even achieved major studio distribution from Paramount. Friday the 13th had so much going for it that it didn't even need the ingredient that had ensured the success of Halloween—namely, critical respect. Quite the opposite, in fact: Where Halloween was praised for its intensity and (comparable) subtlety, the in-your-face approach of Friday the 13th, coupled with the pioneering gore effects of Tom Savini, resulted in nothing less than a national protest from the critical establishment (represented in the main by Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert). Well, we all know how that turned out. Halloween and Friday the 13th both went on to spawn long-running series, both with highs and lows at the box office, but in the end, while reputation will continue to favor Carpenter's creation, Cunningham's little movie that could represents the greater success story (just compare the opening weekend results for Rob Zombie's Halloween and Marcus Nispel's Friday the 13th redux if you don't believe me... fans will debate the merits of this resurrection for years, but nobody will deny its box-office triumph). And while Gene Siskel is no longer with us, even long-time series to Roger Ebert has apparently mellowed in his feelings and admitted it to the mainstream ("as Friday the 13th moves go, this is one of the better ones," he admits in his two-star review of the 2009 release). Heralding the new Friday (which represents the return of Paramount Pictures to the series after their post-Part VIII abandonment), Paramount has served up "Deluxe Editions" of the first three F-13's on DVD, all with special features, bonus outtakes and eye-catching lenticular 3-D packaging.

Cunningham's original has finally been presented in the "uncut, unrated" version previously only seen in poor-quality bootleg form from time-compressed Japanese video. The "missing" footage (viewable separately on Paramount's earlier eight-film box set), adds up to ten whopping seconds, but it's finally integrated into the film proper in good quality—and considering that the highlight involves an extended version of Kevin Bacon's death scene, fans will undoubtedly appreciate the postlude. Far more significant is the fact that Paramount is releasing an "unrated" version at all: for all Paramount did to ensure the success and longevity of the series, its insistence on an R-rated cap on all of its material (including on video) in the 1980s resulted in severe compromises for many a future entry, with some cut material apparently never to be recovered (more on that soon). The original Friday has been provided with a feature commentary track assembled/moderated by Peter Bracken (compiler of the definitive coffee table book Crystal Lake Memories) and including producer/director Cunningham, screenwriter Victor Miller, editor Bill Freida and actresses Adrienne King and Betsy Palmer. This is not a conversation—it's a compilation of previously recorded material as opposed to an impromptu play-by-play session.

The stories here will be familiar to most viewers, but special note should be taken of the critical exorcism the unsuspecting Palmer received for taking the role of the maniacal Mrs. Voorhees: a deluge of protest/hate mail (to her own address) was organized by no less than Gene Siskel himself (through fellow critics generally acknowledged that he had crossed the line and encouraged no such action regardless of their own distaste for the film and Palmer's decision). Luckily, Palmer more than survived the attention and is rightly cherished by new fans to this day. The DVD also includes additional cast/crew remembrances, a convention reunion of the principals (including Tom Savini), a Cunningham featurette, and the hugely effective theatrical trailer. Also on hand is Andrew Ceperley's short film *Last Takes from Camp Blood: Part One*, one of three (to date) "fan fiction" shorts depicting clueless campers meeting their demise at the hands of someone identified only as "Killer" in the credits.

Well, that "Killer" would have to be Jason, right? But remember—it wasn't him originally. Poor, "special" Jason drowned in Crystal Lake because the counselors were too busy screwing around to pay attention to him... hence his mother's vengeful murder spree when the camp was re-opened years later. It was only a dream when Jason himself popped out of the lake, right? Well, it had to be, because that was still the "young" Jason, certainly not the fully-grown maniac who witnessed his mother's death and is now avenging her in Friday the 13th Part 2? Right? Gee, all of this could have been avoided—if mother and son were so devoted to each other, doesn't it seem a bit strange that they could have let all those years pass without one managing to get in touch with the other? Tom Savini certainly thought so—he wanted nothing to do with the Friday sequels and will tell you to this day that "there IS no Jason." (He finally relented and came back for the fourth film in the series, allowing himself to think that he could let his own creation off in the self-proclaimed *Final Chapter*... silly wabbit.) Carl Fullerton and company were brought on board the franchise to supply the signature kills that the audience would no doubt demand, and Steve Miner took over the director's chair, displaying significantly more technical prowess (he would go on to helm Halloween H20: the most critically-loved sequel in that series) than had Cunningham. As confusing as the story concept was; both critical contempt and repeat success at the box office were etched in stone well before the sequel actually came out. While undeniably a "slacker" film than the original, Friday the 13th Part 2 still lacks what freshness the original had (dear old horror fans ultimately recognized the huge influence of Mano Bava's *Bay of Blood*—a film previously



sequenced) was cut for the sake of an R rating; and in this case, the cut material was never recovered. Not even for this Deluxe Edition. It looks great, and it (like its companions) has been retro-fitted with Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound (original mono still available), but it's the exact same film with the exact same cuts... and the exact same confusing ending. Many a fadeout was considered: the preserved head of Mrs. Voorhees was supposed to open its eyes; Ginny (Amy Steel) was supposed to arrive at the hospital, look for her boyfriend Paul (John Furey) in the next room and find Jason instead... who knows what else? Well, you won't find out here. What you do get is an interview with Peter (Crystal Lake Memories) Bracke; more horror convention footage (including a reunion of four "Jason" actors); the theatrical trailer and Part 2 of Andrew Ceperley's *Last Takes from Camp Blood*. Incidentally, Ceperley completed a third installment, which was originally announced as an extra for the third DVD in the Deluxe series, but which failed to materialize.



In fact, the only "extra" to be found on the new release of *Friday the 13th Part 3* (or do you say *III*? The movie itself, unlike the cover, reverts to Roman numerals) is the theatrical trailer, hyping the gimmick of 3-D over everything else . . . which is only fitting, as the movie itself does the exact same thing. Script? We're no longer avenging Jason, we're no longer avenging Mom, we're no longer focusing on camp counselors—Jason simply kills everybody he can find, (a Mom and Pop grocery couple, a trio of motorcycle marauders and, of course, a houseful of "party" teens). Plot-wise, this entry could be skipped in its entirety as it has nothing new or interesting to say about Jason . . . oh, but it does give him the hockey mask for the first time. Sorry, you want to see the creation of an icon, you've got to include this one in the package. And to that end, Paramount has finally conceded that some effort needed to be made to replicate the 3-D theatrical experience on home video. After all, returning director Steve Miner made the gimmick the absolute be-all-end-all of the third entry: despite the relative restraint demonstrated in the past by such directors as André de Toth (*House of Wax*) which kept their films thoroughly watchable even in 2-D, Miner doesn't let a single scene of the third *Friday* go by without skewing perspective and attempting to thrust objects into the face of the viewer. It's tremendously effective when it's actually seen theatrically in 3-D, but the 2-D video version is a compositional eyesore of epic proportions. The 2-D version remains on the DVD out of sheer necessity, however, as the 3-D alternative is less than perfect. While the theatrical rendition utilized the now-famous "gray" 3-D glasses, the *Friday* disc reverts to the red-blue "anaglyph" format (two pairs of glasses have been provided); it does provide some compositional relief, but it plays hell with the color scheme of the movie. Unsurprisingly, some 3-D effects work better than others, but none of them approach the impact of the theatrical experience. Still, it's a generous and much-appreciated gesture on the part of Paramount. Co-writer Martin Krosser apparently specialized in sequels that weren't really sequels (*Meatballs Part 2*, *Silent Night, Deadly Night 5*, *The Toy Maker*), and while that wasn't really the case this time out, one wonders if he was responsible for the completely nonsensical dinner resurrection of Mrs. Voorhees at the lidoout (as if Chris, played by Diana Kimmel, had even heard of her). I myself had the pleasure of telling Betsy Palmer how her character had been re-used for the sequel (without her direct participation)—in turn, she brought down the house by referring to her generous royalty checks for the first two entries. "They owe me another fifteen dollars!" With the *Friday* the 13th franchise poised to devour more box-office dollars than ever before, don't be surprised if Paramount takes advantage of the five remaining titles in their library before too terribly long. The only question remaining is how to make them attractive to those who already own the box set now that the gimmicks have been exhausted . . . hey, a fully restored, uncut and unrated *Part VII* wouldn't hurt and might even help! Are you listening?

Shane M. Dallmann

HORROR HOUSE ON HIGHWAY 5

Directed by Richard Cassey
(1985) Timeless Media Group DVD



It depresses me to admit this now but there was a time in my life when the mere idea of *Horror House on Highway 5* filled me with an almost violent level of joy. *Horror House* wasn't just a slasher movie but a slasher movie in which the killer ran around in a latex Richard Nixon mask. My imagination ran wild with the possibilities. Would he mutter bad one-liners like, "I am not a crook. I'm a murderer, bitch"? Would he kill people in clever Nixon-centric ways, like secretly bombing their villages at Christmas? Sadly, none of this speculation paid off and my love affair with *Horror House* was short-lived. Once I bothered to sit down and watch the film I realized that Michael J. Weldon's assessment of the film as "stupid, very bad and boring" was all too apt. *Horror House on Highway 5* isn't so much a movie as it is a catalog of bad ideas and missed opportunities.

In the movie, a trio of incredibly stupid college students are sent to the town of Littletown by their shouting professor to investigate Dr. Frederick Bartholomew a Nazi scientist who was supposedly responsible for developing the V2 rocket. However, unknown to the long in the tooth teens is a mysterious figure in a Richard Nixon mask is randomly killing people that make gratuitous references to Billy Carter. Complicating matters is the presence of Dr. Mabuse and his seemingly retarded assistant Gary who are kidnapping girls and torturing them with unplugged irons and compulsory dance-offs. Will the dimwitted co-eds survive or will faux-Nixon open up relations to their juglars?

I've often felt that every movie has some redeeming qualities, and as a bad as *Horror House* is there are still a couple of genuinely good moments. The film starts off reasonably well with an amusing scene between Mabuse and Gary as they debate the true meaning of Tarot cards ("La mort means love! See? The skeleton is smiling!") and it finishes with an unnerving shot of a desperate and bloodied Nixon as he frantically emerges from the back of a van. Unfortunately everything in between is pretty useless. It's poorly shot, the pace drags and the plot is a muddled, nonsensical mess. Granted there are some fleeting seconds of unintentional hilarity. I liked the fact that music critic Richard Meltzer angrily threatens to "T-K" Nixon when he refuses to get out of the way Meltzer's car but there simply isn't enough of them to make this film even slightly watchable. Much like David Arquette's excruciating slasher comedy *The Tripper*, *Horror House on Highway 5* fails to live up to its outrageous high concept premise.

Mike Sullivan

A POLICEWOMAN IN NEW YORK (LA POLIZIOTTA A NEW YORK)

Directed by Michelle Massimo Tarantini
(MYA Communication) 1981



Edwige Fenech's third in a series of ribald policewoman films [following *Confessions of a Lady Cop* and *A Policewoman on the Porno Squad*] with its central fetishized character named Gianna. In *New York* sets its sights on a Mafioso and his girlfriend, as Gianna attempts subterfuge by donning a disguise and going undercover. Actor and frequent Fenech co-star Alvaro Vitali (*The School Teacher*, *The Lady Medic*, *Taxi Girl*, *The Virgin*, *The Bull* and *The Capricorn*) pulls off multiple roles, first as a detective (referred to by his real name) and a bodyguard to mob boss Big John, the film's over-stereotyped badie. Humor is of the lowest caliber here, with a running homosexual-themed joke and other lame gags being tossed off fast and furious to various degrees of success; the script, by Jean Louis, Luciano Martino (Sergio's brother), Francesco Milizia, Albert Silverini, Franco Verucci, and Tarantini, is but a litany of clichés strung together. But no matter, we're really here to witness the beauty that is Fenech in skimpy clothing, or, for a few lucky instances, topless.

Berto Pisano (*Patrick Viva Ancora*) provides the ebullient score.

No extras to speak of, save for an Italian language theatrical trailer and a lavish photo gallery with lobby cards, one-sheets and stills.

Arson Graham

WHY IS THIS MAN VISIBLY SHAKEN?

We know it's not a pretty sight. All the poor guy asked for was that his beloved pick up the latest issue of *Scream Magazine* at the local newsstand. Unfortunately, she forgot about it, and when she later remembered to do so, the issue was completely sold out.

It only gets uglier. The man is beside himself . . . He's not even sure if he can go on living!

And it gets worse—there's finger pointing, viscous accusations, old arguments are brought up . . .

DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU!!!

SUBSCRIBE TO
SCREAM MAGAZINE
and NEVER miss an issue!

Get the next four issues for \$32.00.
The first 25 new subscribers will receive a brand spankin' new DVD PLUS a FREE back issue of *SCREAM****
INDICATE WHICH ISSUE YOU'D LIKE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION TO START WITH!

Subscribe online at www.screemag.com
OR send a check or money order to:
SCREAM MAGAZINE
41 MAYER ST.
WILKES BARRE, PA 18702

Make check/money order payable to **SCREAM MAGAZINE**.

*** Select from the following back issues:
2,6,9,10,11,12,13,15,16,17.





Welcome to the inaugural edition of *Wrong Way Home*, a DVD column for the all sleaze-beasts and sloop-mongers in Screem-land, a handy guide to low-ball horror, sleaze, exploitation and T&A DVD releases, both new and reissued, hand-plucked by yours cruelly (and occasionally foisted-upon by the boss). Who am I, you ask? I'll tell you this much: my street cred is impeccable. Now, on to the carnage.

William Girdler is/was (he died in a helicopter crash in 1978) one of the 70's trash-film greats. The movies he made were dank, ugly, grubby affairs with downer endings, drugged-up non-actors, slumming, paycheck-starved pros, and creepy, wrist-slashing muzak scores. He is the man behind *Grizzly* (1976), *Sheba Baby* (1975) and *Asylum of Satan* (1975), among other, even more rotten anti-epics. The repulsive *Three on a Meathook* (1972) was his debut. Yet another in a long line of early 70's Genspoitiation films, *Meathook* uses the Ed Gein story closer than *Chainsaw* (1974) but without the fetish-y eye for puke-worthy details that litters *Deranged* (1972). The story is a simple proto-slasher, as four girls fall prey to a seemingly nice country boy when their car breaks down during a weekend camping trip. Guess where three of 'em end up? Grim, miserable, humorless, and draining, *Three on a Meathook* is prime gutbucket 70's drive-in vomit that practically begs you to watch under the influence of box wine and pills. As for the DVD, for once, Televisa's back-alley production values work in their favor. It looks—and probably is—sourced from a crinkly VHS, and is even grainier and more mottled than the green-washed theatrical prints grindhouse slobos had to contend with in '72. A can't miss for a very weird evening.

Much like Adam Green's *Hatchet* (2006), festival favorite *All the Boys Love Mandy Lane* (also '06) is a conscious effort to revamp the eighties stalk n' slash model. Unlike the gut-piling *Hatchet*, *Mandy Lane* relies more on atmosphere and story than it does on fistfuls of grue. Also unlike Green's splatterfest, the film has been stalled and hobbled from theatrical release half a dozen times in the past three years, before being unceremoniously dropped into a DVD release. It's an alarming trend, this sudden DVD dumping, and one that's stymied several high-profile, low-budget horror titles over the past couple years (throw *Repo!* *The Genetic Opera*, *Trick R' Treat*, and *Midnight Meat Train* into the mix, as well). Regardless, it's good to finally have this film in (legit) release, because it's a fast n' fun old-school romp about a gorgeous blonde in full teenage bloom (Amber Heard) invited to a debauched weekend at a remote ranch with a handful of her classmates, most of which are dudes scheming to get into her skintight jeans. The usual drunken reverie ensues, but things go decidedly off-the-rails when one of her secret admirers starts to messily cut down the competition. Filled with the expected red herrings, false endings, and scream-than-lump jump scares, *Mandy Lane* is a fun and vigorous slasher redux that hits all the right notes. Surprisingly, given all the time this thing has had to gestate, the DVD is thin-on-the-vine when it comes to extras: the UK theatrical trailer (it actually played in British theaters for a spell) and an interview with an already-over-it Amber Heard. I imagine there will be a two-disc deluxe double-dip popping up sometime in the near future, but until then, you'll probably want to snatch this one up.



I am all for backwoods regional filmmaking, for without it, we'd never have loony gems like *Crypt of Dark Secrets* (1976) or *Boardinghouse* (1982). I am also a big Debbie Rochon booster, a clearly accomplished and highly effective actress unfortunately mired in the low-end of the scream-queen trashpile. You'd think the combination of the two would reap rich, gooey z-movie rewards, but that's just not the case here. Admittedly, there's a cultural disconnect at work for me. Having grown up in the 70's and 80's, the supposed 'golden age' of horror, I am used to rubbery prosthetics, gratuitous nudity, and elements of camp. I have no relationship whatsoever with torture porn, and view it as the cinematic equivalent of nu-metal: clanging, soulless, and instantly dated. *Slash*, (Bloody Earth Films) alas, is torture porn, a mash-up of psycho hillbilies and girl-trapped-in-a-basement-dungeon, ala *Captivity* (2007) or Jack Ketchum's *Girl Next Door* (also '07). One the plus side, the Kentucky-lensed film is carefully constructed and earnestly acted; on the downside, it's cheap looking and completely unpleasant. Rochon is the boozey mom of the dungeon girl, and does her best to appear spaced and bedraggled during a woozy interrogation scene that served as the only highlight for me. There's a very sarcastic five-minute interview with her in the over-stuffed extras section that's practically worth the price of admission, but otherwise, you'd really have to be into battered chicks in chains to get much out of *Slash*.

Speaking of unpleasant, there's the willfully repugnant *Gutterballs* (TLA Releasing) to contend with. A sort of revamped *Sorority Babes in the Slimeball Bowl-a-Rama* (1987) with graphic sex scenes and lashings of wince-worthy ultraviolence, this neon-splattered outrage is the work of Ryan Nicholson, the screwball behind 2006's equally full-on *Live Feed*. Nicholson clearly has no sense of decency and/or morality, which mostly works in his favor here. The story, such as it is, involves two rival bowling teams who brawl in an after-house bowling alley free-for-all while a masked killer stalks picks them off one by one. Since the teams consist of over-amped alpha-jerks and hot chicks, there's also plenty of aggressive teenage sexuality on display, including lots of full frontal (girls and boys) and startling toilet-floor sex. Unfortunately, there's also a protracted pool table rape scene, mean and graphic, which goes on seemingly forever and really sucks all the fun out of the room. Without it, *Gutterballs* would have all the potential to become a cult classic, because certainly, all the elements are there: gore, breasts, laughs, pranks, a bloody orgy-of-vengeance, etc. Unfortunately, the pool table scene will just be out-of-putting for anyone besides adolescent boys and rape-fetishists. I understand your balls-out philosophy, Mr. Nicholson, but you've gotta remember the golden rule: if it bends, it's funny. If it breaks, not funny. And you broke it with all that rape-y garbage.

UNCUT/UNCENSORED HORROR, GIALLO,
GORE, EURO/ASIAN, EROTIC/ADULT, MORE!

UNEARTHLY VIDEO

1000s of titles on DVD or VHS!
New DVD quality releases constantly
added in updates mailed to you FREE,
upon your first order! Our customers
LOVE the free mailed bi-monthly
updates!!!

Save \$\$\$-Giant Quantity Discounts!
HURRY! Get your giant shocking
illustrated catalog: PayPal \$2 to
fullvista@aol.com
Or mail \$2.00 (cash only) to:

UNEARTHLY VIDEO, Dept. M
PO Box 681914, Orlando FL 32868-1914
fullvista@aol.com

Our 12th Year
of Fun & Fear

DraculaTour Transylvania

Spend Halloween In Dracula's Castle
October 27 - November 3, 2009

&
Summer Vampire Vacation to Transylvania
July 9 - 16, 2009

also go to the
Ghost tour
The Haunted Vacation to England
May 10-17-2009
Professionally Escorted Guided Tour of
Britain's Chief & Haunted Places

www.Dractours.com
Call Toll Free (866) T-E-R-R-O-R-I-S-T
Direct Line (203) 795-4737



Cheerleaders is only 11 minutes long, but in its too-brief running time, it manages to jam every major tenet of the teenploitation and splatter-comedy genres into one rollicking bit of gonzo filmmaking. Penny (Laurel Vail) and Devon (Wyatt Fenner) are two put-upon goth kids in a high school full of sadistic jocks and bimbo cheerleaders. Things take a turn for the weird when Penny performs an ancient Greek ritual in class one day, which transforms Devon into some sort of teenage sex god, irresistible to the cheer squad who become his willing love slaves. Penny tries to reverse the curse before Devon performs the dreaded 'bloody orgy' that will seal his fate as cocking to golden-haired nubbles forever, and they square off during a climactic and gory football game filled with cannibal cheerleaders and chewed-up jocks. A student film directed by Peter Podgursky at the University of Southern California, *Cheerleaders* is funny and fast-paced, a cartoony blast of 80's style horror-comedy that hits hard and then spills before it wears out its welcome. Very much in the same cheeky vein as Fred Olen Ray's immortal *Hollywood Chansaw Hooks*, all *Cheerleaders* lacks is that crucial bit of gratuitous tit-flapping. Perhaps when the inevitable full-length version comes to light, Podgursky will throw in a shower scene or two. Until then, visit him at *Cheerleaders.com* for more info on this entertaining little bad-fun nugget.

Finally, I wanted to give note to the frequently jaw-dropping and very funny low-budget shock-comedy *The 18 Year Old Virgin* (Asylum). Starring the adorable (and crazy-eyed) Olivia Alaina May, Virgin follows nerdy valedictorian Katie (May) on one disastrous post-graduation night as she tries, desperately, to lose her virginity during a raucous house party. Standard teen-com stuff, albeit gender-flipped, but this film really takes the premise to new heights of outrage as Katie (graphically) shaves her wild, flaming red bush with a sputtering electric razor (it gets caught, naturally), vomits on some poor slob's member during an ill-advised attempt at oral sex, gets mistaken for a she-male (she accidentally wanders around the party with a strap-on poking out of her jeans), stuffs raw chicken into her bra and, yes, eventually finds true love and a healthy poking. Featuring way more nudity than you'd expect and a hilariously slapstick performance from its lead, this strangely maligned film is well worth seeking out. Funny bones will be tickled, and boners will be popped.

That's it for this month. Visit me at <http://sleazegrinder.blogspot.com/> and <http://boobstheblog.blogspot.com/> for more reviews and, if you want to send me something—particularly something with either heaving breasts or slavering, monstrous death-dealers (or both, if you can muster it) you can contact me at Sleazegrinder@gmail.com, or just hit up ye olde editor. Either way, we anxiously await your submissions. I signed a contract with Darryl to keep doing this until one of us dies, so let us keep things rolling. I've got a lot of time on my hands.



DVD QUICKIES

Brief reviews and DVD news

Troma Team DVD reunites Maniac stars Joe Spinell and Caroline Munro in the underrated gem *The Last Horror Film*. Vinny Durand (Spinell), a lonesome New York cab driver who lives at home with his mother, has dreams of becoming a famous film director. Consumed by his depraved obsession with beautiful horror actress Jenna Bates (Munro) and determined to have her star in his first film, Vinny trails her to the Cannes Film Festival. While Vinny's disturbing fascination grows, a mysterious killer begins slaughtering people in Jenna's entourage. Are the obsessed fanatic and the psychotic killer one and the same? Will this be Jenna's last horror film? Available for the first time on DVD, the 1982 film contains a wealth of extras—*My Best Maniac*: a conversation with Joe Spinell's best friend Luke Walter; a visit to Spinell's gravesite; feature-length audio commentary with Walter and Troma's Evan Husney; Buddy Gornitzko's rarely-seen short film *Maniac 2: Mr. Robbie* starring Spinell; and, an interview with Maniac director William Lustig. Spooking of Buddy G., look for Troma to soon re-release *Combat Shock* under its original title, *American Nightmare*—uncut for the first time ever on home video.

Joe Woon Kim, the director who gave us the brilliant *A Tale of Two Sisters*, is back with *The Good, The Bad, The Weird*, a fun tribute to Spaghetti Westerns. The Korean film has a good mix of action and slapstick comedy, but the less than enthralling plot leaves a lot to be desired. For genre fans, the import only DVD is a must buy, but don't expect the disc to hit our side of the pond anytime soon.

Johnny Legend's new DVD label, Raunchy Tonk, recently launched several special edition trifs. Among the new discs are Arch Hall Jr.'s cult classic *The Sadist*, which now boasts a new high-definition transfer, and it features such extras as an interview with Arch Hall conducted by the late, great Ray Dennis Steckler, a handful of trailers, and an Arch Hall video songbook! *Biker Mania* is a compilation of trailers from motorcycle movies, taken from the fifties through the seventies. I never realized just how many Hells Angels related films were produced—or how many biker flicks Bruce Dern appeared in! There's *Black Angels*, *Pink Angels* (a gay biker film), *she-dies*, *were-wolves*, everything but *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* on a bike! One thing is for sure, Hollywood grabbed onto cycle cinema in the sixties, and drove it right into the junkyard. *Biker Mania* is a nostalgic look back at when motorcycle mania ruled the big screen.

John Russo, who penned the original *Night of the Living Dead*, wrote and co-directed *The Booby Hatch*, a hilarious sex comedy from 1976. Available briefly on VHS, the film finally arrives on DVD by Synapse Films. Here's a bit of *Scream* trivia—*The Booby Hatch* was the magazine's first feature article in our debut issue, and John Russo was responsible for writing the article as well.

1968's *The Cremator* is a must see for fans of bizarre gothic horror. Lensed beautifully by Stanislav Milota (shades of Kubrick!) and directed by Juraj Herz, this black-and-white film is a grim tale about a man named Karl who runs a crematorium in his native Czechoslovakia (circa 1933). Karl is obsessed with his job—he feels like he is doing a great service—after all, he is just directing souls to be reborn! What begins as a dark comedy, soon turns into a stark dose of terrifying reality as Karl transforms from a dedicated family man to a perverted still for the Third Reich. Brilliant, disturbing, and uncomfortably fascinating, *The Cremator* is a film you won't soon forget. It receives our highest recommendation.

Xenon's *Abar, the First Black Superman* (aka *In Your Face*) is blatant exploitation at its best. When a black doctor and his family move into a white residential area, all hell breaks loose when fears of property decline set in. Before you can say, "There goes the neighborhood!", in steps Abar and his vigilante group, taking it to racist white! Abar does have superpowers (although he doesn't have a costume), but he doesn't abuse his strength—unless he's confronted by bigots—and lord knows there are a surplus of them in this picture! From the catchy opening theme to the jaw dropping "I didn't see that coming" ending, *Abar, the First Black Superman* is truly the original Dark Knight.

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

Mondo Macabro delivers more Bollywood horror—*Mahakaal the Monster* and *Veerana*. Mya Films has *The Legend of Blood Castle*, *The Sweet Pussycats*, and *Return of the Gladiator*. New to Blu-ray—*Ichu the Killer* (Tokyo Shock/Media Blasters), *Two Evil Eyes* (Blue Underground); *Let the Right One In* (Magnolia Home Entertainment); *Army of Darkness* (Universal); *Plague Town* (Dark Sky); and, several more James Bond titles arrive from MGM—*Goldingfer, The World is Not Enough*, *Never Say Never Again*, *Moonraker*; and *Quantum of Solace*.



KINO THE BEST IN WORLD CINEMA
INTERNATIONAL

From The Father of Horror Films
F.W. MURNAU

NEW 2-DISC RESTORATION



DVD
\$29.95

SPECIAL FEATURES

- Contains the restored German version and the previous U.S. release version
- "The Language of Shadows: Faust," a 53-minute documentary on the making of Murnau's film
- New musical score by the Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra
- Image Gallery • And More

Digitally Mastered from 35mm Archival Restorations
Supervised by the Friedrich-Wilhelm-Murnau-Stiftung, Wiesbaden

"HIGHLY RECOMMENDED... Across the films, we see the filmmaker grow and invent as he entertains, making this a pretty essential collection for cinema fans."
- DVD Talk, March 2009

NEW 6 FILM THINPAK BOX SET

Includes Acclaimed
Restoration Editions
of **NOSFERATU**,
FAUST and
THE LAST LAUGH



Plus **NEVER BEFORE RELEASED**
**THE HAUNTED
CASTLE** and
**FINANCES OF
THE GRAND
DUKE**



BOX
\$99.95
SET



Released by KINO INTERNATIONAL • (800) 562-3330 • www.kino.com
Order the NEW 2009 KINO CATALOGUE Listing More Than 500 Films

The Most **VIOLENT** Movie Ever Made! Starring The Godfather Of Gore **LUCIO FULCI!**

"A shocking exposition of gore, mutilation and sordid sex, certain to satisfy the sick set. A MASTERPIECE!"

-David F. Friedman, legendary producer of BLOOD FEAST and KSA, SHE WOLF OF THE B.S.

"The fun never stops! Sadism, carnage, brutality, lust and utter psychosis delivered as only Lucio Fulci can...The Italian Master!"

-CLIVE BARKER, director of HELLHAUSEN

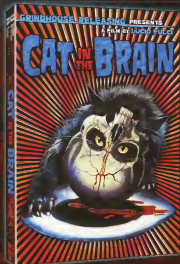
"Chainsaw emplacements, decapitations, piano wire throat slashings, testicles being fed to revvered pigs, eye-grasping, masses of Y&A, graphic beatings, tongue-rappings...all and much more are present and correct. And I mean much more! FOUR STARS!!!!!!"

-CHAS. BALUN'S DEEP RED

LUCIO FULCI's

CAT IN THE BRAIN

TWO DISC DELUXE EDITION



Acclaimed Italian horror maestro Lucio Fulci, director of **ZOMBIE** and **THE BEYOND**, stars in this blood-soaked epic as a director being driven insane by his own movies. Fulci is thrust into an ultra-violent nightmare of death and depravity where murder and madness consume his sanity in a vortex of violence. **CAT IN THE BRAIN** is a psychological masterpiece in the tradition of such cinematic classics as **PSYCHO**, **STRAIT-JACKET**, **ERASERHEAD** and Fellini's **8 1/2**.

SPECIAL FEATURES

- **EYEBALL-POPPING** psychedelic lenticular 3-D cover limited to **FIRST 2500 COPIES ONLY!**
- New hi-definition anamorphic digital restoration of the **UNCENSORED DIRECTOR'S CUT**
- Presented with English and original Italian language soundtracks
- Never-before-seen, in-depth interviews with director Lucio Fulci and star Brett Halsey
- Lucio Fulci's heroic appearance at the 1996 NYC **Foergerin Weekend of Horrors**
- Original Italian theatrical trailer • Gallery of stills and poster art
- Lieer notes by Antiochia Fulci, horror novelist David J. Schow and Eli Roth
- **PLUS OTHER SURPRISES!**

WARNING! Due to its **SHOCKING** and **VIOLENT** subject matter, no one under 17 should view this film.

SINCE 1996, THE UNDISPUTED LEADER IN QUALITY EXPLOITATION
WWW.GRINDHOUSERELEASING.COM



Available at amazon.com

